Kent Rail Strategy 2021

County Hall, Maidstone

January 2021

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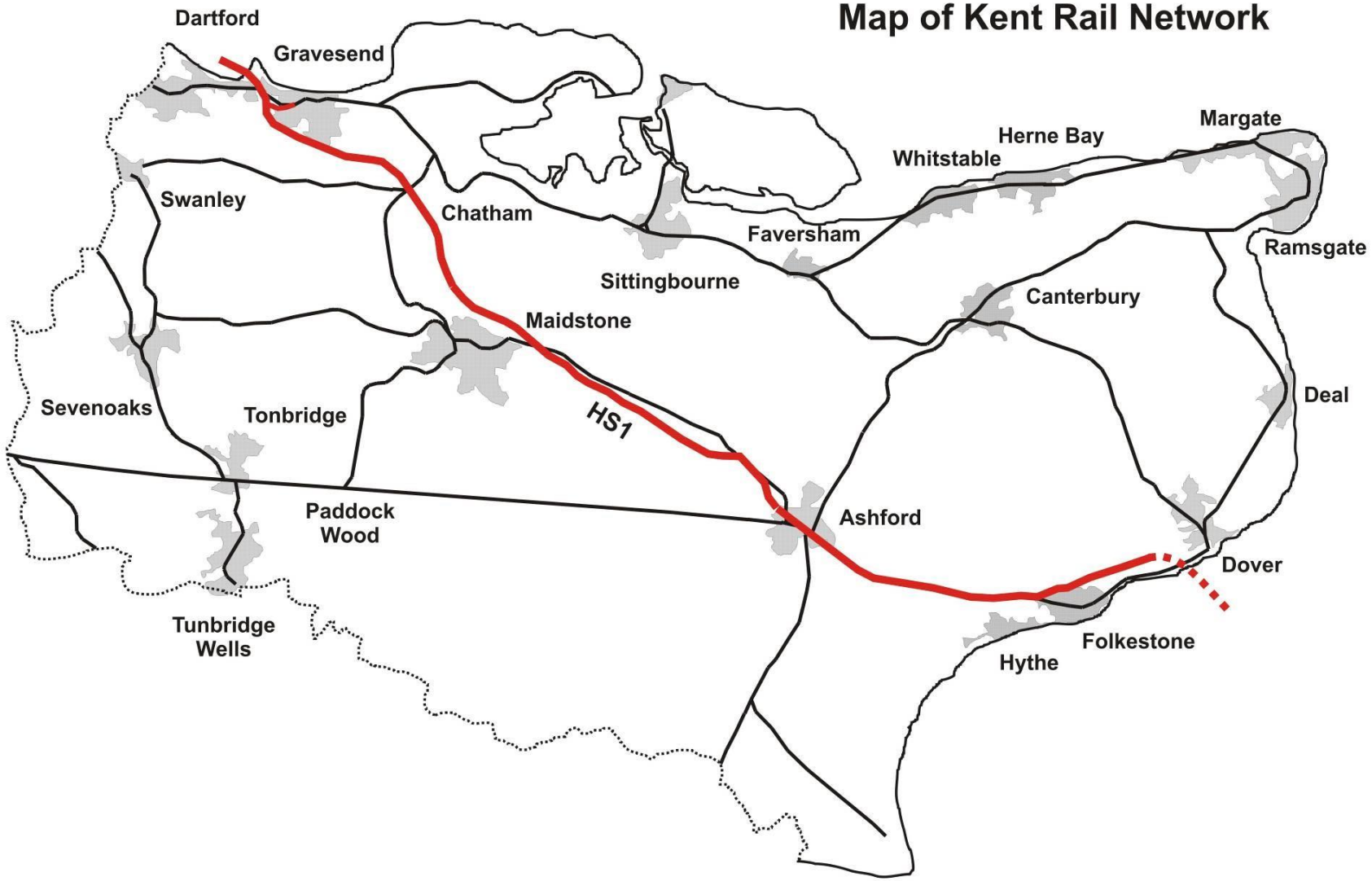
Front cover image

The new Class 800 series produced by Hitachi is one example of a new train design that could provide the bespoke additional fleet which will be required for Kent's High Speed services. The picture shows a Class 800 train on a test run before entry into service. *[source: Hitachi Ltd, 2015]*


Map of Kent Rail Network
Dartford
Gravesend
Swanley
Chatham
Sittingbourne
Faversham
Whitstable
Herne Bay
Margate
Ramsgate
Canterbury
Deal
Maidstone
Sevenoaks
Tonbridge
HS1
Paddock Wood
Ashford
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Tunbridge Wells

Foreword

By the Leader of Kent County Council

Kent is at the forefront of many of the challenges with which our nation is faced today. Over a number of years, an increase in residents and visitors alike has naturally resulted in ever increasing demand for transport, and the provision of efficient, reliable, comfortable and affordable rail services is essential to meet that demand.

The COVID-19 pandemic has substantially diminished demand for rail travel; nonetheless, it will be central to economic recovery, and especially a recovery that is compatible with reduced congestion and carbon emissions. We therefore need to look beyond the present crisis to a time when demand for rail travel will return to, and eventually surpass, its previous levels.

We must ensure that all the right conditions are in place for the renewal of economic growth that we want to see in Kent, providing improved opportunities for business development, employment, education and leisure. Kent's rail service is key to meeting these objectives, through its provision of High Speed, Mainline and Metro services, together with our increasingly popular Community Rail Partnership lines.

So we have developed this Kent Rail Strategy 2021 with two key purposes: to provide a detailed response to the public consultation which will precede the new agreement for the next South Eastern concession; and to support the closer integration between train and track already advocated in the preview of the Government's Williams Rail Review. That is why this new rail strategy champions a replacement fleet for our Metro services in West Kent, as well as a substantial increase in the High Speed fleet which has so successfully grown the rail services in North and East Kent in the past decade.

As Kent's County Council we will continue to stand up for Kent's residents and commuters, while warmly welcoming visitors to our county and supporting a revival of that visitor economy. Rail has always played a key role in the transport network in Kent; it is essential that rail continues to do so throughout the 2020s and beyond, ensuring the very best service to meet the needs of all who live in, work in and visit the County of Kent.

Roger Gough, Leader, Kent County Council

Executive Summary

i The principal purpose of this new Kent Rail Strategy 2021 is to influence the train service and rolling-stock fleet specifications which will inform the next South Eastern concession agreement, for the operation of Kent's rail passenger network for at least the next decade.

ii The Kent Rail Strategy is aligned with national and local transport policies which recognise rail as a key element of Kent County Council's (KCC) transport priorities for the next decade, as well as the need to achieve deliverable modal shift of passengers and freight from road to rail, supporting the climate change agenda by reducing carbon emissions and thus contributing to a healthier environment.

iii The Department for Transport (DfT) in 2018 tasked Keith Williams, the former Chief Executive of BA, with undertaking a comprehensive review of the structure and organisation of the rail industry in Great Britain. KCC responded to the call for evidence which informed the Rail Review and highlighted the failure of the existing franchise system, while acknowledging the improved performance delivered by Kent's primary franchised operator, Southeastern, in recent years.

iv KCC published its most recent statutory Local Transport Plan (LTP4) in 2017, which sets out the Council's transport priorities for the period up to 2031. The plan recognises the importance of rail within the overall provision of transport in the county, highlighting the pressures on demand for rail travel and the need for additional capacity on High Speed, Mainline and Metro services in Kent, which is one of the key priorities for the new South Eastern concession. The County Council now plans to develop a new Local Transport Plan (LTP5) to reflect changes to transport policy as a result of the COVID-19 and climate change emergencies.

v The Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework sets out the forecast growth in population, housing and employment across the county to 2031, together with the infrastructure required across all sectors to support that expansion. This rail strategy recognises the effect of this anticipated growth and the consequent significant increases in demand for rail passenger services during the next decade, and this is reflected in the proposals in the strategy for enhancements to Kent's passenger rail services and network infrastructure. This is especially so in respect of the delayed Thameslink service from Maidstone East to the City, which would add much needed capacity to serve West Kent's projected population growth and relieve overcrowding on other routes to the capital.

vi This rail strategy champions the need for a replacement for the Metro fleet and for an increase in the High Speed fleet. The Metro fleet serving West Kent is in urgent need of modern, higher capacity trains offering real benefits for these frequent commuter services, while the High Speed fleet serving North and East

Kent is in immediate need of strengthening to meet the ever increasing demand for these highly successful High Speed services.

vii A new South Eastern concession award is now expected in the early 2020s, and following the Williams Rail Review national rail policy is on the cusp of further major change. It is to meet these objectives that Kent County Council now presents this ‘Kent Rail Strategy 2021’.

1. Introduction

1.1 The principal purpose of this Kent Rail Strategy 2021 is to influence the infrastructure outputs, rolling-stock fleet and rail service specifications which will inform the next South Eastern concession agreement, for the operation of Kent's rail passenger network for at least the next decade.

1.2 Specifically, to ensure the delivery of this outcome, this strategy sets out these ambitions for that next South Eastern concession:

- To determine the required passenger service levels in each sector of the network: High Speed, Mainline and Metro
- To set out the requirements for rail infrastructure enhancements to facilitate these levels of service
- To establish the requirements for new fleets of rolling-stock in each sector to enable these service levels to be realised
- To improve the provision of passenger station facilities and communications.

1.3 The Kent Rail Strategy is aligned with national and local transport policies which recognise rail as a key element of Kent County Council's (KCC) transport priorities for the next decade. As the established Local Transport Authority, KCC has a statutory duty under the Transport Act 2000, as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008, to publish a Local Transport Plan (LTP) setting out the authority's key transport plans and priorities. The current LTP is 'Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock 2016-2031' (KCC, April 2017). The Kent Rail Strategy recognises the need to deliver modal shift of passengers and freight from road to rail, supporting efforts to tackle the climate change emergency by reducing carbon emissions and thus contributing to a more resilient environment.

1.4 In view of the recent changes brought about by the COVID-19 and climate change emergencies, KCC now proposes to prepare a new Local Transport Plan (LTP5) to reflect these new transport priorities. The COVID-19 pandemic has also accelerated thinking about home working and has demonstrated that with the right technology home working is a realistic alternative to office based employment. While this development has significantly affected demand for rail travel, there is a need to plan ahead for a post-COVID-19 world in which such demand has returned to near its pre-COVID-19 level.

1.5 KCC supports both the Kent Community Rail Partnership and, for cross-county routes to East Sussex and Surrey, the Southeast Community Rail Partnership. There are also several new Community Rail Partnerships (CRP), including the Darent Valley CRP (established in 2019), and the Thanet and White Cliffs CRPs (both established in 2020 following funding from Southeastern). The Kent Rail Strategy recognises the contribution

these partnerships make to their local lines and to the communities they serve and supports the Council's continued engagement with them. There also remains scope for the electrification of two of the rural routes in Kent served by Southern, which would further contribute to reduced carbon emissions.

1.6 International rail services contribute vital connectivity for Kent through Eurostar's routes which serve Ebbsfleet and Ashford, and the Kent Rail Strategy champions the expansion of these international services to enhance the business and leisure economies of Kent. While these services are currently suspended from Kent's international stations following the rapid decline in passenger demand due to the COVID-19 pandemic, KCC will continue to work with our colleagues in other authorities to urge Eurostar to reintroduce them at the earliest possible time.

2. National Rail Policy

2.1 The Department for Transport (DfT) tasked Keith Williams, former Chief Executive of British Airways, in 2018 with undertaking a comprehensive review of the structure and organisation of the rail industry in Great Britain. Although rail transport is a devolved matter for the Scottish Government and Welsh Assembly, the scope of the Williams Rail Review covers the whole of Great Britain but excludes Northern Ireland.

2.2 KCC responded to the call for evidence which informed the Rail Review. The Council highlighted the failure of the existing franchise system on such routes as East Coast Main Line, while recognising the success of operators such as Chiltern Railway (which has developed strong alliance partnership working with Network Rail) and Open Access operators such as Hull Trans and Grand Central. KCC's response also acknowledged the improved performance delivered by Kent's primary franchised operator, Southeastern, in recent years, and the need to divide Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) into smaller operating areas. As an existing management contract mandated by the DfT, GTR also provides services on some of Kent's routes.

2.3 In his address to the Bradshaw Society in February 2019, Williams made this assessment of the present state of the franchising model:

> "I have heard a great deal about the franchising model which has been one of the innovations of the railway since the 1990s - driving growth in passengers and benefits in services. But with this growth the needs of passengers have changed, whilst many of the basic elements of our rail system serving those needs has not kept pace. Too often the current system incentivises short term behaviours and inhibits reform."

2.4 He then spoke of the need for a replacement model which was better suited to the needs of the railway today and in the future:

> "Put bluntly franchising cannot continue in the way that it is today. It is no longer delivering clear benefits for either taxpayers or farepayers. The review will continue to examine what the best commercial model or models are for the future [and] what they might be."

2.5 Williams then explained the need for a radical transformation in the structure of the rail industry to support the continued growth in passenger demand by bringing the operation of track and trains closer together:

> "But what is true is that [the] system - from Network Rail, the Department for Transport and the Office of Rail and Road, to train operating companies and their workforce - does not have the structure and clarity of accountability it needs to properly deliver.

That's reflected in Andrew Haines's [CEO of Network Rail] conclusion that there's need for 'radical change' at Network Rail. To boost performance. To bring track and train closer together. And increase devolution, with more localised management."

2.6 He then spoke about the requirement for a wider range of solutions rather than, as originally happened when the railways were privatised in the 1990s, a 'one size fits all' approach:

"We need to recognise that there is unlikely to be a 'one size fits all' solution which will work for every part of the country and all types of passenger. That's why we will continue to consider all potential answers. From new models of franchising to greater public control of contracts. To much more localised decision-making and integrated concessions, where those operating trains and managing infrastructure work together in genuine partnership, acting like a single business absolutely focused on customers."

2.7 The final report of the Williams Rail Review was originally expected in December 2019 but was then postponed to July 2020. Following the COVID-19 pandemic this deadline has been further delayed, probably to later in 2021, so any assessment of the findings of the review must wait until publication. The report was planned to be followed by a Government White Paper which would determine the future structure of the rail industry, and which would subsequently inform the model to be utilised for the next South Eastern agreement. Subsequently, the DfT has announced that it will replace the franchise model completely with a new 'concession' type of agreement, whereby the DfT sets all the criteria for the operation of a given passenger service and awards concessions to train operating companies on this basis, while retaining all the revenue risk.

2.8 The new regional structure of Network Rail, currently being created by the new CEO, Andrew Haines, is based on a move to unified operation in partnership with rail service operators. This is entirely in accordance with the initial announcements from the Williams Rail Review and builds on successful partnerships such as that developed between Network Rail's Kent Route and Southeastern in recent years.

2.9 The new Southern Region of Network Rail now includes the Kent Route, together with Sussex Route, Wessex Route and Network Rail (High Speed). Through greater integration of previously independent functions such as Implementation Project teams within the new Southern Region, there is far greater scope for the delivery of unified projects by Network Rail. This will be of particular benefit to schemes proposed in Kent during the period of the new South Eastern concession agreement, some of which will be essential to deliver the enhanced passenger service identified in this Kent Rail Strategy *[see section 5: Rail Infrastructure Outputs Required in Kent].*

2.10 The existing operator, Govia's London & South Eastern Railway Limited trading as "Southeastern", has been granted a further Direct Award by the DfT, which commenced on 1 April 2020 and will conclude on 16 October 2021. The DfT has announced that, following the termination of the temporary Emergency Measures Agreement with Southeastern, a new Direct Award will be made with the existing operator, commencing on 17 October 2021. This new concession agreement will have a core period of 2 years until 16 October 2023, with the option of further extension periods of up to 4 years, potentially lasting until 16 October 2027.

2.11 So the next competitive award for a new South Eastern concession agreement will now not commence until October 2023 at the earliest, and potentially not until October 2027. Whether this new competition leads to a longer period of between 10 and 15 years' duration, as envisaged in the Williams Rail Review, remains to be seen. This new Kent Rail Strategy has been prepared to provide a key contribution towards the determination of that new competitive concession agreement.

2.12 The Metro section of the South Eastern operating area serves south-east London and some stations in Kent: Dartford and stations to Gravesend; and Dunton Green and Sevenoaks. In recent years there have been various proposals for the transfer of these Metro services to London Rail, the rail subsidiary of Transport for London. (TfL). KCC remains open to consideration of this devolution option for these Metro services, provided that the previously negotiated and agreed "red lines" – which would protect paths to and from London termini for Kent services, protect fares within Kent, and maintain existing priorities at junctions – were retained.

2.13 Whether or not these Metro services were devolved to TfL, KCC supports the concept of "metroisation". Essentially this enhancement of Metro services would include a new Metro rolling-stock fleet, lengthened platforms where required to take 12-car trains, standard frequencies each hour, improved facilities at fully staffed stations while trains were operating, and some rationalisation of London termini served. In fact, the Metro services from London Bridge can already operate in 12-car formation, but those operating from Victoria and Blackfriars are limited to 8-cars due to platform lengths and traction power capability. Network Rail is examining the case for lengthening these services as part of its new Continuous Modular Strategic Planning (CMSP) process *[see paragraph 5.9].*

2.14 Fares policy is one of the most controversial issues facing the rail passenger today. KCC supports a realignment of national fares pricing policy with annual increases based on the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) and not on the current use of the Retail Prices Index (RPI). There needs to be a new deal between the Government and the rail passenger, which, while recognising the need to transfer rail revenue from tax-payer subsidy

to rail-passenger ticket revenue, nevertheless eases that transition by adopting this new measure for regulated fares.

Regulated Fares

2.15 The new structure of the rail industry which emerges from the Williams Rail Review should be a catalyst for a step-change in the Government's directed rail fares policy. At present, regulated fares – those which apply in peak periods, as well as season tickets and some long-distance off-peak fares – normally rise by RPI + 0% in January each year, as determined by the measurement of RPI the previous July. For 2021 however, the DfT has announced that regulated fares will rise by a much higher amount of 2.6%, effective from March rather than January but considerably greater than the expected rise of 1.6% based on RPI. Such a disproportionate increase in regulated fares is unacceptable and will further dissuade travellers from using rail for peak journeys, encouraging greater modal shift from rail to private road transport.

2.16 As the increase in almost every other cost or benefit in life is determined by the generally slightly lower CPI, this should become the new measure of annual regulated fares, i.e. CPI + 0%. This would at least address some of the concerns of rail passengers at the very high annual percentage increases with which they are hit every New Year, determined as they are by the previous July's measure of inflation.

The Coronavirus COVID-19 Pandemic and Home Working

2.17 The coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated thinking about home working and has demonstrated that with the right technology home working is a realistic alternative to full-time office based employment. Such a change in working practice is likely to continue, at least in part, once the pandemic is controlled, and more flexible fare options such as part-week season tickets could also be facilitated using Smart ticketing technology, whereby commuters can choose to travel on fewer days of the week reflecting these changes to office / home working practice.

2.18 There should also be a new option of 'shoulder-peak' fares, whereby those who choose to commute to and from their place of employment or education just outside the core peak hours are offered a 'shoulder-peak' fare, which while more than the off-peak fare would be less than the full peak fare.

2.19 The High Speed services operating in Kent charge a further premium fare, which started as a fixed percentage based on the route used. For example, journeys via Ashford charge a higher premium than those via Chatham where the time savings are not so great, while Gravesend has a higher premium fare proportionately than other stations on that route because almost the whole journey is on High Speed. Some journeys actually have no differential whilst others have only a minor difference from the Mainline fare, as over time the premium fare charged has been

distorted due to several factors. The new South Eastern agreement might be a suitable opportunity to consider simplification of the High Speed premium fare, so that there is a more equitable match between the journey time saved and the fare charged.

Unregulated Fares

2.20 The off-peak fares available in Kent, which are all unregulated and so determined solely by the franchise operator, usually offer very good value for money, especially when purchased with one of the wide range of railcards now available for most passengers. The new South Eastern agreement should expand the current offer, promoting 'super off-peak' fares on weekdays and all day at weekends and public holidays, to encourage greater use of spare capacity on off-peak trains between Kent stations and London and also within Kent to visitor destinations such as Canterbury and Margate.

2.21 The new South Eastern concession agreement should develop Smart and Mobile forms of ticketing with a 'best price' promise across all ticket media, with the existing "Key" smart ticketing initiative extended to individual journeys as well as season tickets. Smart ticketing should also incorporate an option for flexible ticketing, whereby commuters can choose to travel on fewer days of the week, reflecting modern office / home working practices, especially post-COVID-19. Both the current operator Southeastern and Network Rail support the principle of moving towards integrated ticketing, encouraging increased use of the railway system.

2.22 The operator of the next South Eastern concession should also commit to a collaborative approach with KCC, so that when technology enables it a new 'Kent Smartcard' scheme could be delivered to incorporate travel by bus and rail services across the county. This will require compromise and collaboration by bus operators across Kent if such a scheme is to be successfully delivered.

2.23 The Sevenoaks Rail Travellers Association (SRTA) has provided an informed and well developed strategy on a wide range of issues affecting Sevenoaks. Their specific proposal concerning ticketing is supported by KCC:

> "SRTA would like to see [London] Zonal fares extended to Dunton Green and equivalent North Kent stations. We would support Sevenoaks being treated in a manner similar to Watford Junction in having a special fare (set by the train operating company, not TfL) but integrated with London Zonal fares. Consideration should be given to including the Darent Valley line stations if both Swanley and Sevenoaks were in the Zonal system. The SRTA does not have a view on the technology employed, provided it is not less than the facilities of

the current Oyster card and usable by commuters for all tickets on all TfL services."

[Sevenoaks Rail Travellers Association (SRTA): Preliminary Thoughts for the Kent Franchise, December 2015]

2.24 Rail Future, an independent pro-rail pressure group, has proposed that there should be a requirement for weekday contra-peak fares at off-peak prices, including railcard discounts, to enable longer days away, especially from London. KCC supports this innovative proposal, which would encourage rail travel for such days when early/mid-morning starts are required from more distant destinations, and thus make better use of spare contra-peak capacity.

2.25 The DfT's decarbonisation strategy, together with the Kent Energy and Low Emissions Strategy, emphasise the imperative of responding to the climate change emergency by developing transport policies which deliver modal shift from road to rail and thus reduce greenhouse emissions. This modal shift needs to apply to both passenger and freight sectors to ensure that rail plays its part in contributing to a permanent reduction in pollutants and a consequent improvement in air quality.

3. Kent's Local Transport Policy

Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock 2016 - 2031 *[LTP4: KCC, April 2017]*

3.1 KCC published its most recent statutory Local Transport Plan, LTP4, in 2017, which sets out the Council's transport priorities for the period up to 2031. The Plan recognises the importance of rail within the overall provision of transport in the county, highlighting the pressures on demand for rail travel arising from forecast growth in housing and employment. While the cost of peak period commuting is an issue for Kent commuters, it is the need for additional capacity on both High Speed and Mainline services in Kent which is the principal priority for the new South Eastern agreement.

3.2 LTP4 emphasises the importance of a rail strategy for the county to make the case to Government for enhancements to the rail network, which in turn will facilitate the required improvements to service levels in High Speed, Mainline and Metro sectors. These enhancements are set out as options for funders in Network Rail's 'Kent Area Route Study', which is considered in detail in section 5. The Local Transport Plan also reiterates the importance of restoring the link between Maidstone and the City with the planned new Thameslink service, which has itself been further delayed since the publication of LTP4 *[see 4.14 & 4.15].*

Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5)

3.3 In response to Government and Council transport policy as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with an overriding need to respond to the climate change emergency by reducing carbon emissions, KCC now proposes to develop a new Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5). As part of the Council's new policy to deliver modal shift in favour of sustainable transport modes, rail services in the county will continue to play an essential role in delivering this objective, and this key role will be reflected in the emerging new Local Transport Plan.

Growth and Infrastructure Framework *[KCC, 2018]*

3.4 In 2018 KCC published the Growth and Infrastructure Framework (GIF) for the period to 2031. The GIF forecast significant growth in population, housing and employment during this period for Kent and Medway, with even greater growth predicted in the updated data published by KCC's Strategic Commissioning – Analytics team based on 'Housing Led' Forecasts (November 2019) *[see section 4.1 for detailed population and housing growth forecasts].*

Economic Recovery Plan for Kent and Medway

3.5 In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, KCC and Medway Council are preparing a new Economic Recovery Plan which will set out the key elements required to restore economic activity in the county. This new

plan will replace the earlier draft Enterprise and Productivity Strategy and will focus on measures which widen employment opportunities and potentially increase demand for rail travel towards pre-COVID-19 levels.

3.6 The Economic Recovery Plan for Kent and Medway is a detailed product for the Economic Recovery Cell, which is part of the multi-agency Kent Resilience Forum. This more detailed plan is part of a broader Kent and Medway Covid Recovery Strategy, which has several supporting thematic action plans for economic recovery including transport infrastructure.

3.7 KCC's new rail strategy also considers proposals in Network Rail's Kent Area Route Study, which sets out options for funders for infrastructure enhancements on the Kent rail network to reflect projected increases in passenger demand *[cf section 5: Rail Infrastructure Outputs Required in Kent].* The strategy will also consider options for service enhancements such as the creation of a direct link between Kent, Gatwick and Reading, which would expect to be supported by the emerging sub-national transport body, Transport for the South-East.

Transport Strategy for the South East *[Transport for the South East, 2019]*

3.8 Transport for the South East (TfSE) is the shadow sub-national transport authority for south-east England outside Greater London. Its geographical scope covers 16 county and unitary authorities and extends from Kent and Medway to Hampshire and the former county of Berkshire. The shadow authority has prepared a Transport Strategy which will form the basis of a comprehensive Transport Strategy for south-east England if it were to be adopted. Once TfSE were to be granted statutory status, the authority would also become a formal consultee for the new South Eastern agreement.

3.9 The TfSE Transport Strategy highlights the need for improvements to both the orbital and radial rail networks, with particular emphasis on the need for Crossrail 1 (in Kent) and Crossrail 2 (in Surrey), as well as increased capacity on the Brighton Main Line. KCC has long advocated a direct rail service linking Kent with Gatwick, and the TfSE Transport Strategy strongly supports the concept of a new regional rail service linking together the counties of south-east England with each other and with Gatwick outside Greater London. Such a service could be delivered with only modest further infrastructure enhancements and could be a natural extension of the existing GWR operated Reading – Gatwick service by extending this to Canterbury West via Redhill, Tonbridge and Ashford.

3.10 Network Rail is also working closely with TfSE on their Transport Strategy and the planned corridor studies. The rail infrastructure provider will be providing rail analysis to support the studies and will actively consider how journeys on non-London orbital routes can be improved. This will include the Redhill - Tonbridge - Ashford route, looking at how better connected services can be provided in the future.

Delivering for Kent: The Economic Impact of HS1 *[Steer, 2019]*

3.11 The introduction of High Speed services led to a step change in rail provision in Kent, and these services have proved extremely popular. High Speed 1 Ltd (HS1) has recently been pro-active in championing the need for additional domestic services to utilise the spare capacity that exists on Kent's High Speed (HS) route. This report by Steer rightly praises the substantial benefits which have accrued to Kent since the inception of HS services in 2009, and it is estimated that since then the number of journeys on the HS network has almost doubled, with 26 million journeys made in 2018.

3.12 It is a rare opportunity in the national rail network to have spare network capacity existing alongside excess passenger demand, and this Kent Rail Strategy consequently advocates a substantial increase in the frequency of HS services in Kent. Additional rolling stock to allow the lengthening of services not currently 12-cars would provide additional passenger capacity, although the ability to run more than one or two additional peak services is constrained by several factors including the pathing of International services and platform capacity at St Pancras.

3.13 Such an increase in capacity as proposed in this rail strategy would address the existing levels of serious overcrowding in peak periods and alleviate the absence of peak capacity at Ebbsfleet. Such an enhancement in HS service levels would increase further the range of employment and higher education opportunities available in Central London for residents of Kent, thereby increasing further the Gross Value Added (GVA) to the Kent economy.

4. Key Drivers of Demand for Rail Services in Kent

4.1 The Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework (GIF) *[Kent County Council, 2018]* sets out the planned growth in population, housing and employment across the county to 2031, together with the infrastructure required across all sectors to support that expansion. This data, subsequently updated in 2019 by KCC Strategic Commissioning, highlights further substantial growth throughout Kent and Medway, leading to increased demand for rail passenger services between Kent and London for access to employment, education and leisure purposes during the next decade.

4.2 The proposals for enhancements to Kent's rail network in this strategy also reflect this increased demand. The tables below set out the planned increases in population and housing across Kent and Medway between 2021 and 2031 *[source: Strategic Commissioning – Analytics, KCC, based on 'Housing Led' Forecasts, November 2019].*

TABLE 1: TOTAL POPULATION FORECAST 2021 – 2031

DISTRICT	2021	2031	CHANGE	% increase
Ashford	133,600	154,200	20,600	15.4
Canterbury	169,600	184,400	14,800	8.7
Dartford	118,300	139,200	20,900	17.7
Dover	119,900	127,600	7,700	6.4
Folk & Hythe	115,000	122,800	7,800	6.8
Gravesham	108,700	115,400	6,700	6.2
Maidstone	177,300	190,600	13,300	7.5
Sevenoaks	123,300	132,000	8,700	7.0
Swale	151,900	163,800	11,900	7.8
Thanet	144,400	163,100	18,700	12.9
Ton & Malling	136,100	145,600	9,500	7.0
Tun Wells	121,700	131,400	9,700	8.0
KENT	**1,619,800**	**1,770,100**	**150,300**	**9.3**
Medway UA	285,100	313,800	28,700	10.0
KENT & MED	**1,904,900**	**2,083,900**	**179,000**	**9.4**

TABLE 2: TOTAL DWELLINGS FORECAST 2021 – 2031

DISTRICT	2021	2031	CHANGE	% increase
Ashford	56,900	68,700	11,800	20.7
Canterbury	72,200	82,000	9,800	13.6
Dartford	49,400	60,100	10,700	21.7
Dover	56,000	63,000	7,000	12.5
Folk & Hythe	54,500	61,600	7,100	13.0
Gravesham	44,400	49,200	4,800	10.8
Maidstone	74,500	83,600	9,100	12.2
Sevenoaks	51,400	57,200	5,800	11.3
Swale	65,500	74,300	8,800	13.4
Thanet	70,800	84,000	13,200	18.6
Ton & Malling	56,800	63,600	6,800	12.0
Tun Wells	52,800	60,000	7,200	13.6
KENT	**705,200**	**807,300**	**102,100**	**14.5**
Medway UA	117,900	134,300	16,400	13.9
KENT & MED	**823,100**	**941,600**	**118,500**	**14.4**

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

4.3 The COVID-19 crisis has drastically reduced demand for rail travel in the UK, and it is currently uncertain when previous levels of demand for rail travel will return. The emergency timetable operated by Southeastern during the emergency provided a basic hourly or half-hourly frequency on most routes in Kent, and even these services carried a minimum number of passengers. Planning for a new service network during such an emergency carries the danger of ignoring the long-term demand which, while perhaps less than some original forecasts, is still predicted to increase substantially by 2031, especially on HS services.

4.4 Perhaps the most significant change brought about by the COVID-19 crisis will be evidenced in the reduction of full-time office working, with a significant shift to home working on at least several days each week. As both private and public sectors of the economy have experienced this change, there may be an opportunity for shared office accommodation away from London, perhaps with the train operator or Network Rail wherever this is available. However, while there is a real prospect of providing additional capacity by an effective reallocation of peak seats in this way, this must not diminish the medium and long-term need to plan for significant growth in demand for rail travel in the county, based on the forecast growth identified in the Growth and Infrastructure Framework.

4.5 Apart from the effect of the COVID-19 crisis, there has for some time been an underlying shift away from full-time working in office locations. One immediate effect of this change to home working on several days each week has been a significant reduction in the sale of season tickets and a corresponding increase in the demand for day tickets. The new South Eastern agreement must therefore include a requirement for the new operator to provide flexi-seasons and shoulder-peak tickets, both available through Smart ticketing as well as traditional methods. Such an innovation would further encourage the move to some home working days, thus easing peak demand across the working days of the week.

Tourism and Leisure Travel in Kent

4.6 During the past 20 years the visitor economy in Kent has doubled in size. The county now attracts over 65 million visitors per annum *[source: Visit Kent, 2020]*, placing it in the top 10 most successful domestic destinations in England and the third most successful destination for international visitors outside London, attracting more than 1 million international visitors each year. Visit Kent coordinates and promotes 2-for-1 ticket offers at attractions for those who travel by rail, tactical pricing campaigns, poster campaigns at London termini and tactical sign-posting and mapping at stations. This work needs to be continued in the new South Eastern agreement, and further built upon to ensure that the potential of the visitor economy, particularly in driving demand for off-peak services, is maintained and developed.

4.7 The 149th Open Golf Championship will now be played at Royal St George's Golf Club, Sandwich in July 2021. The project to enhance the capacity of Sandwich station to serve this and future such events was completed by the end of October 2020*,* and these additional facilities will be brought into use as required. Train service planning by Southeastern for The Open has continued, with the principal service to be provided by High Speed trains between London St Pancras and Sandwich, via either Canterbury West or Dover Priory. Additional services will also be provided via the Mainline route between London Charing Cross and Sandwich as required.

4.8 The planned developments at Ebbsfleet Garden City and Otterpool Park Garden Town will both require specific enhancements to rail services at their respective stations. The HS service at Ebbsfleet, while very frequent, is effectively full and standing on arrival at Ebbsfleet in peak periods and cannot meet the growing demand at this location. The new TSR will therefore need to make provision for an increase in the level of HS service at Ebbsfleet by improving the existing HS service to/from Maidstone West *[cf section 7 – Rail Service Outcomes in Kent].*

4.9 Otterpool Park Garden Town has the locational advantage of being built adjacent to the existing Westenhanger station. Folkestone & Hythe District Council is already working in partnership with Network Rail to develop the station, with 12-car length platforms, lifts to provide access for all, and a new station building planned to meet the expected growth at this location. The rail service outcomes *[cf section 7]* include proposals to serve Westenhanger with HS trains to meet the increased demand which will arise here, once an agreed dwelling occupancy level has been reached in the new Garden Town.

Abbey Wood to Ebbsfleet Connectivity Study

4.10 When the Elizabeth Line (formerly known as Crossrail 1) eventually opens from Abbey Wood to Central London, a new range of destinations and journey opportunities will be opened up for rail passengers from Kent. A single interchange at Abbey Wood from the North Kent line service will bring passengers direct to the heart of the City and West End, with the Elizabeth Line continuing direct to Heathrow Airport. A further change at Farringdon will also give access to the completed Thameslink network, offering access to a wide range of destinations throughout south-east England and East Anglia. Network Rail also supports the aim to provide better connectivity at Abbey Wood with the Elizabeth Line, and is a key contributor to the Abbey Wood to Ebbsfleet Connectivity Study funded by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

4.11 The proposed London Resort Theme Park on the Swanscombe Peninsula is currently the subject of an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO). Investment in public transport infrastructure will be required that is commensurate with the size and scale of the development, and Network Rail and public transport operators, including Southeastern, will review the proposals and respond to the DCO once it is granted.

4.12 The proposed improvements under consideration in the Abbey Wood to Ebbsfleet Connectivity Study involve all the public authorities on the line of route. However, while the earlier proposals for this enhancement were focused on an extension of the heavy-rail Elizabeth line to Ebbsfleet, the scope of the project has now been widened to include a range of transport options, including Metro services, Fastrack bus services, or connecting coach services. A chief executives' group and an officers' technical group are continuing to progress this project, which will eventually produce a Strategic Outline Business Case examining all these options and recommending those which are judged to deliver best value for money.

4.13 As the scope of the project has now been extended in this way, it is very unlikely that any proposal will be delivered along this route until at least the mid-2030s. KCC will continue to support the project through member and officer representation, to ensure that the additional capacity required by all the proposed developments at Ebbsfleet, Gravesham and Dartford is delivered.

Thameslink to Maidstone East

4.14 The proposed Thameslink service to Maidstone East has now been postponed on four occasions. It was originally due to commence in January 2018, and has since been delayed to May 2018, then to December 2018, then to December 2019, and recently to an unspecified date in the future. KCC's Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport, and all his recent predecessors, have all written to the Rail Minister expressing the serious concerns of residents and businesses along the proposed route, many of whom have already made location decisions based on the proposed service.

4.15 This strategy therefore calls again on the Rail Minister to approve the operation of this last leg of the whole Thameslink service programme, with at the very least an all-day service between the county town and Blackfriars if there remains disquiet about operating the full 24tph service level through the central Thameslink core between Blackfriars and St Pancras. This would provide a regular Thameslink service every 30 minutes over its line of route.

School and Further Education (FE) College Demand for Rail Travel

4.16 There are significant school and college peak demand flows by pupils and students at several locations across Kent. In West Kent, there are high levels of demand by pupils travelling between Edenbridge and Tonbridge, where trains have recently been re-timed to facilitate appropriate school arrival and departure times. There are also high school pupil flows between Orpington and Sevenoaks, and between Otford and Sevenoaks, and then between Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells. There is also a significant level of peak demand flows by pupils at Maidstone East. In East Kent, there are high school pupil flows to and from both Canterbury stations, and also significant demand from students attending the FE college here. There is a similar demand from students attending the new FE college at Ashford, and those at Folkestone and Dover. The new concession agreement should be cognisant of any future changes in demand for these school and FE travel needs, and respond accordingly with appropriate changes to service levels.

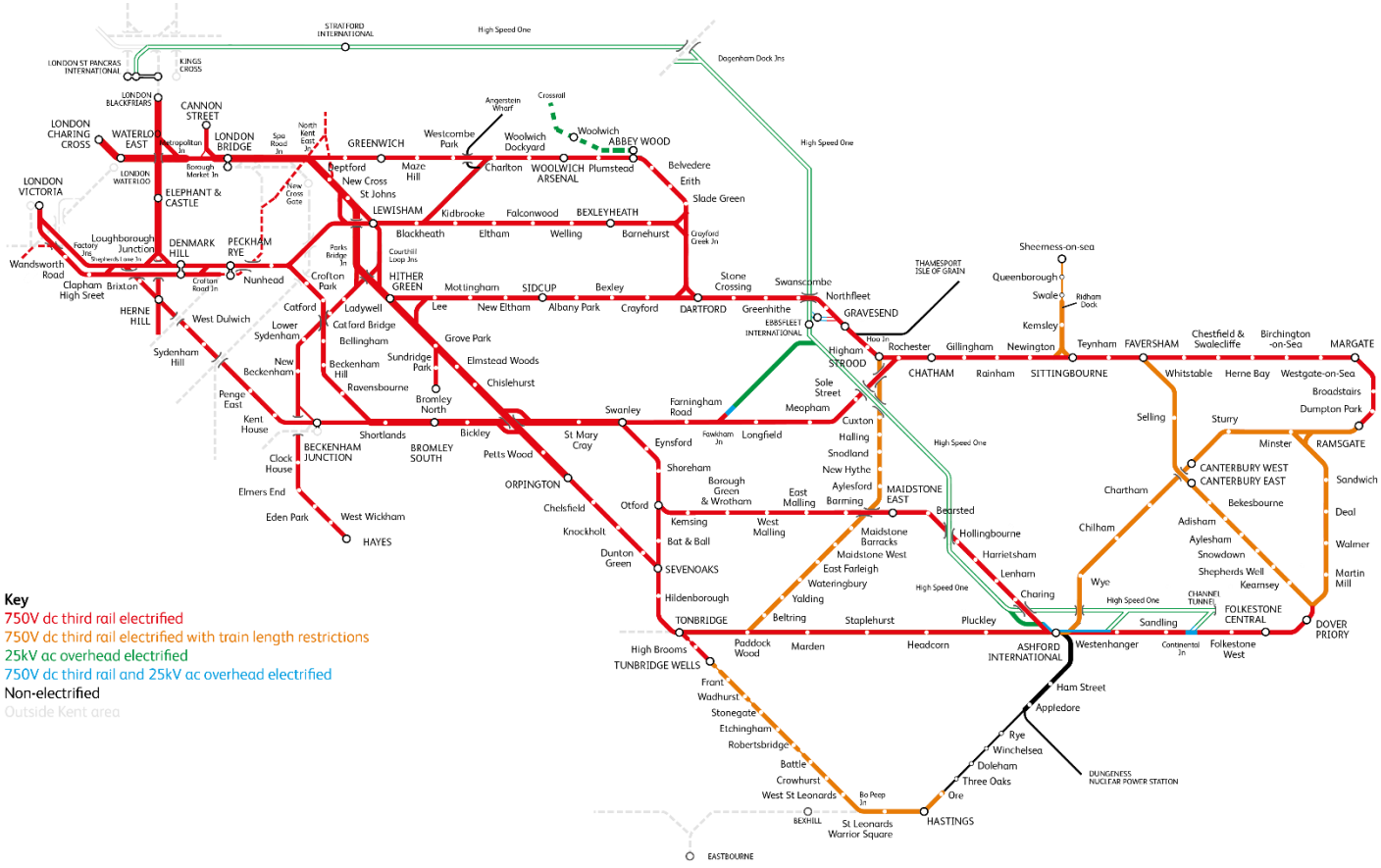
5. Rail Infrastructure Outputs Required in Kent

5.1 Network Rail published the 'South East Route: Kent Area Route Study' in May 2018. The route study was prepared with input from many public sector organisations including KCC, rail user groups and associations, and interested individuals. Its purpose is to provide an evidence base to inform funders considering rail investment for the medium and long term. The Route Study therefore identifies ways in which the rail industry can meet forecast demand for both passenger and freight over the next decade and beyond.

5.2 The Route Study then states that 'a combination of train lengthening, timetable changes and infrastructure interventions will be required, but the lack of terminal capacity is the greatest challenge and will need further industry wide work to develop options' *[source: Foreword, Kent Area Route Study, Network Rail, May 2018].*

5.3 The Route Study also contains significant proposals as options for funders within the period of Network Rail's Control Period 6 (CP6: 2019-2024), and further options for consideration beyond that period to 2044. The principal options for funders detailed in the Kent Area Route Study are summarised below, including options for electrification shown here:

Map Showing Electrification Capacity, Kent Route



[source: Network Rail, Kent Area Route Study, May 2018, figure 3.6]

5.4 Kent Area Route Study – Options for Funders

[references are to paragraphs in the Route Study]

(i) Marshlink (6.13.2)

- New connection at Ashford International that allows trains from HS1 to access the Marshlink line
- Electrification of the Marshlink line from Ashford to Ore
- Journey time improvements and/or redoubling of the route
- Proposal is being progressed under Kent & East Sussex Coastal Connectivity SOBC, with expected outputs by April 2021.

(ii) Ebbsfleet Southern link (6.13.26)

- Either: New terminating platform adjacent to existing operational lines
- Or: Provide a connection into the existing domestic platforms.
- This could be a candidate for consideration as part of the DfT's 'Restoring Your Railway' Programme.

(iii) North Kent to South Kent (6.13.29)

- Longer-term option to build a spur line between the Ashford to Canterbury West line and the Faversham to Canterbury East line in the Chartham area.
- The topography of the landscape means that a direct rail link is not possible to the west of Canterbury. Network Rail has undertaken a pre-feasibility study of a 'Canterbury Parkway' station where the lines cross. High level findings have been shared with Canterbury City Council. It is a challenging location and the costs could be around £250m. A development such as this would need to be part of a major future transport strategy for the area.

(iv) Canterbury Chord – Resilience (6.13.32)

- Longer-term term option to build a spur linking the Canterbury East and Canterbury West lines to the south-east of their present passing point, to provide resilience for any future disruption caused by extreme weather on the route between Dover and Folkestone.
- No development work has been undertaken, but it could be an alternative way of providing north-south Kent Connectivity, with a reversal at Canterbury East. This option can be considered further as part of the North & East Kent CMSP.

(v) Thanet Parkway Station (6.15.8)

- This third party scheme is promoted by KCC and principally funded by the south-east LEP. The new station is due to open in May 2023, and KCC has requested the DfT that the new Train Service

Requirement specifies all Mainline and High Speed trains which pass the station will stop there.
- The Network Rail Regional Sponsor Team are leading the development in partnership with KCC.

(vi) Westenhanger Station (6.15.22)

- This third party scheme is promoted by Folkestone & Hythe District Council and will need to be principally funded by the developers of the planned Otterpool Park Garden Town adjacent to the station which its development is designed to serve.
- Network Rail is working with Folkestone & Hythe District Council on options for the development of the station.

(vii) Maidstone West – platform extensions (6.7.4)

- This option would enable 12-car operation of High Speed services to/from Maidstone West. While demand at Maidstone West does not require 12-car operation, the benefit of running 12-car trains on this service is that they would provide the capacity required to meet the substantial demand at Strood, Gravesend and Ebbsfleet, thus offering relief to the already overcrowded High Speed service via Medway.
- Any further development work would be dependent on confirmation of 12-car operation of High Speed services in the TSR for the new South Eastern concession agreement.

(viii) Maidstone East and Swanley – station improvements

- Improvement work at these stations is progressing well. The improvement to the front area of Maidstone East is now due to be completed in 2021 and will provide an enhanced gateway for rail passengers arriving at Kent's county town. The works at Swanley are at an earlier stage of development, and improvements here should be delivered during the next two years.

(ix) Power Upgrades

- There are various proposals in the Route Study for power upgrades at locations on the Kent Route where 12-car operation is currently inhibited or even prohibited. Such upgrades will be an essential addition to the overall capacity of the Kent rail network, facilitating the operation of the longer trains proposed in this strategy. This is especially required on the section of route south of Tunbridge Wells, to enable the operation of consecutive 12-car trains in peak periods.
- A power modelling exercise will be undertaken to support any service changes proposed as part of the new South Eastern concession agreement, to ensure that the rail infrastructure has the capacity required to support any enhancement in service levels.

(x) Signalling Upgrade: Sevenoaks to Orpington

- There is a proposal from the Sevenoaks Rail Travellers Association (SRTA) for an upgrade to the signalling between Sevenoaks and Orpington, which is a two-track heavily congested section of railway operating at maximum capacity in the peak periods. The proposal from the SRTA is for a study to examine options to update the signalling to permit 24 paths per hour on this section in each direction, which would dramatically increase the capacity of the network at its most congested point in Kent.
- This area of the network does operate at close to full capacity, but this is largely governed by the mix of fast and stopping services on this section of route. When the signalling is renewed options for improving the headway can be considered but may be of marginal benefit in releasing additional paths due to the stopping patterns and other network constraints such as London terminal capacity.
- While this proposal is not included in the current list of funding options in the Kent Route Study, it is worthy of consideration and is supported by KCC. The Council recognises the importance of this proposal, and that it should be made known to bidders for the new service agreement.

Additional Enhancements Required

5.5 In addition to the options for funders listed by Network Rail, KCC has identified the following infrastructure interventions which will be required to support specific enhancements in passenger rail services:

(xi) Canterbury West Station: additional platform

- The existing down siding needs to be converted into an additional through platform 3, which would provide a turn-back facility to serve an increase in the frequency of High Speed services. It could also serve any future new regional rail route operating from Reading to Canterbury West via Gatwick, extending the existing GWR service via Redhill, Tonbridge and Ashford.
- This enhancement option is being considered as part of the Kent and East Sussex Coastal Connectivity SOBC.

(xii) Dollands Moor: new connection between High Speed & Mainline

- The creation of a new crossover between the High Speed and Mainline routes at Dollands Moor would enable the operation of High Speed services from Dover Priory, Folkestone Central and Folkestone West stations to cross over in the Up direction on to the High Speed Up line and thereby reduce overall journey times to London. In the Down direction an earlier crossover would be used by trains to cross

from High Speed down to High Speed up lines, before using the new crossover to access the Mainline.

- Such an intervention would require DfT support if it were to be included in a future programme of infrastructure interventions on the Kent Route and High Speed 1. This option is also being considered as part of the Kent and East Sussex Coastal Connectivity SOBC.

(xiii) Cuxton Chord: new connection to link Medway Valley line with North Kent Mainline

- Rail Future, and many other respondents to the public consultation, proposed the inclusion of a new Cuxton Chord linking the Medway Valley line and the North Kent Mainline between Cuxton station and Roman Way, to enable eventual direct Medway Towns / Maidstone - Gatwick Airport inter-regional through services.

New Funding Methods

5.6 The DfT established in March 2018 two new funding methods for rail infrastructure projects, which complement the emerging Route Studies such as that for the Kent Area. These funding methods do not apply to Operational, Maintenance and Renewal (OMR) costs, which are covered by the separate financial settlement between the DfT and Network Rail for each 5-year Control Period (currently CP6: 2019-2024).

5.7 The first of the new funding methods is the 'Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline' (RNEP), which sets out a 5-stage process for the delivery of funding including a positive business case. All schemes have to compete with each other for funding, which then have to be approved by the DfT before being submitted to HM Treasury to secure the required investment. The infrastructure options listed above could be eligible for RNEP funding applications where there is no obvious third-party funder (e.g. additional platform at Canterbury West).

5.8 The second of the new funding methods is the 'Rail Market-Led Proposals' (RMLP), which applies to private-sector proposals for rail infrastructure investment where a third party promotes a particular investment scheme which it agrees to fund in its entirety. Network Rail then has to approve the scheme before it is added to the Route Asset Base (RAB). The infrastructure options listed above could be eligible for RMLP funding applications where the proposed enhancement is to be entirely developer funded (e.g. Westenhanger Station).

Continuous Modular Strategic Planning

5.9 Network Rail is now developing Continuous Modular Strategic Planning (CMSP), the output of which will be a Modular Strategic Study. In conjunction with stakeholders this will be a strategy to meet the capacity and connectivity requirements for rail for the medium to long term. It will also examine opportunities for how rail can contribute to the Government

target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The outputs will be recommendations for change or investment by Government or third party funders. This new method of strategic planning presents an opportunity for KCC, and other public authorities in Kent, to participate in the formation of policy for the rail network, through the planning of infrastructure outcomes and train service capacity improvements to meet forecast increased demand over the medium to long term.

Access for All

5.10 'Access for All' is a DfT funded programme that is largely delivered by Network Rail in partnership with Southeastern. Good progress has been made by Southeastern by improving access for all at many stations in Kent, but there are many which still do not offer level access to all platforms. It is a sign of a civilised society that those with different needs should be afforded accessible facilities, especially to enable a joined-up and step-free rail journey. The need for an enhanced programme of accessible facilities across the Kent rail network was the single most important issue raised by those who responded to the consultation on the Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA). Respondents to the public consultation on the rail strategy also emphasised that the provision of accessible facilities should be interpreted broadly, to include non-visible as well as physical impairments. It must therefore be a condition of the new South Eastern concession agreement that the concession operator, in partnership with Network Rail's Kent Route, is required to plan and deliver an extended programme of 'Access for All' facilities at stations, to be fully funded through an extended 'Access for All' agreement by the DfT. This must be a key objective of the new concession agreement, with the goal of eventually delivering an entirely accessible rail network in Kent.

6. Rolling-Stock Outputs Required in Kent

6.1 The existing operator, Southeastern, inherited a range of rolling-stock in both Mainline and Metro sectors when the original franchise commenced in 2006. There is a general recognition that most rolling-stock will provide on average 30 years of service, with a mid-life major overhaul required at 15 years. The new High Speed rolling-stock joined the Southeastern fleet in 2009 and should reasonably be expected to remain in service until at least 2039. The Bombardier-built Electrostar family of trains joined Southeastern in 2003 (with some cascaded across from Thameslink in 2017), and this cohort should continue to provide service on the Mainline routes until at least 2033. Metro routes are served in the main with Networker trains which are nearing life expiry, and this fleet will require complete replacement early in the new South Eastern concession agreement period.

6.2 The passenger network in Kent consists of three distinct service groups: High Speed, Mainline, and Metro. Each of these will be considered in turn in respect of the rolling-stock outputs required for each group during the period of the new South Eastern concession agreement.

<u>High Speed Fleet</u>

6.3 The single most urgent requirement for new rolling-stock is on the High Speed network serving Ebbsfleet, Maidstone West, the Medway Towns and Faversham, and Ashford and East Kent. Demand continues to outstrip capacity, and projections provided by Network Rail in their long-term planning process indicate not only crush-loaded standing conditions in peak periods from 2024 onwards, but often trains full to capacity and thus unable to provide a peak service from some stations. The need for a substantial uplift in HS capacity has long been recognised, and this strategy addresses this critical issue *[cf section 7: Rail Service Outcomes Required in Kent].*

6.4 The train service tables in section 7 demonstrate the proposed enhancements in service levels which are estimated to require the following increases in HS rolling-stock, in addition to retaining the 29 existing 6-car Class 395 sets. These Hitachi-built HS sets were built to a bespoke design for Southeastern capable of operating on HS1 with overhead 25kv AC traction and on Mainline with third-rail 750v DC traction, but this class of train is no longer available in regular production.

6.5 This forecast of future increased demand for High Speed service capacity should support the DfT in the approval of the procurement of a new fleet of Class 800/801 or similar HS rolling-stock, of which there will have to be a similar variant to the Class 395 trains to provide the flexible operation required on Kent's rail network. In addition, part of this new fleet will need to be bi-mode (Class 800/802 or similar), as and when the new

infrastructure enhancement is funded and delivered at Ashford to permit through operation of HS trains between St Pancras and East Sussex.

Class 800: example of new fleet of High Speed train on test run, which could be procured for Kent's High Speed services *[source: Hitachi Ltd, 2015]*

6.6 Based on the proposed improved service levels set out in section 7, the estimated requirement is for a total of 14 new 5-car HS trains as follows:

7x5-car* bi-mode units for a combined service with trains dividing at Ashford for Folkestone/Dover and Hastings/Eastbourne;

5x5-car* EMUs for enhanced service via Ashford for Canterbury West/ Margate;

2x5-car* EMUs for strengthened service via the Medway Towns and Maidstone West routes.

**These would be equivalent to the existing 6-car lengths of the Class 395 trains, with a double-coupled train of 10-cars being equivalent in length to the 12-cars of the Class 395 trains*

Network Rail supports the need for additional rolling stock on High Speed 1 services, as evidenced in the Kent Route Study. An extensive route clearance exercise would also be required if new rolling-stock consisted of vehicles longer than the existing standard of 20m.

Mainline Fleet

6.7 The current fleet of Electrostar trains, mainly consisting of Class 375 sets built by Bombardier, have all had their mid-life heavy overhaul and are set to continue in service until at least 2033. The addition of 17 x Class 377 4-car trains cascaded from Southern in 2017 has been most beneficial to Kent's Mainline network, especially to the Maidstone East line where they have replaced Networker units which have in turn strengthened Metro services in south-east London.

6.8 The new South Eastern concession agreement should see the completion of the refurbishment of the cascaded sets, ensuring that they continue to be fit for purpose. During the course of the new concession, the operator will need to address the replacement of the Electrostar trains as they approach their end of life towards the start of the next decade.

6.9 The two original Kent Community Rail Partnership (CRP) routes now benefit from Electrostar operation with 3-car versions of the Class 375 trains, and these have improved the journey experience and improved accessibility for passengers. There are also several new CRP routes which have recently been created in Kent, following an increase in funding for CRPs through the current franchise agreement *[see paragraph 9.1].*

Metro Fleet

6.10 The mainstay of the Metro service fleet, which predominantly serves south-east London routes, is the Networker. These trains were first introduced by British Rail prior to privatisation, and many have worked for almost 30 years on the Southeastern network. There are also Bombardier built trains, the Class 376, which are only 15 or so years old and which will continue to operate on the Metro network.

6.11 In April 2020 Southeastern announced the planned arrival of a DfT-approved cascade of 30 almost new 5-car Class 707 trains from South Western Railway (SWR). The introduction of the Class 707s is dependent on the timing of the arrival of new Class 701s to SWR, and so the Class 707s will be cascaded when the Class 701s become available. While the exact area of operation of these nearly new units is still to be determined, they will provide a welcome improvement to the Metro fleet and should allow the withdrawal of the oldest Networker trains from the few Kent routes they still serve.

Class 707: example of new Metro train due to be cascaded to Southeastern – additional sets could be procured for operation on Metro routes

[source: Modern Railways]

6.12 The most urgent task facing the operator of the new South Eastern concession agreement will be the need to procure a replacement Metro fleet for the remainder of the Networker trains for the Metro services. Most of the stations on the London Bridge Metro network have had their platforms extended to take 12-car trains and the new fleet would need to match this provision, but part of the new Metro fleet would need to consist of 8-car trains to serve the Victoria and Blackfriars Metro routes as these are only capable of 8-car operation.

7. Rail Service Outcomes Required in Kent

7.1 Metro Services

Following the transfer of the service from London Charing Cross via Blackheath and Woolwich Arsenal to Dartford and Gravesend (and now extended to Rainham) from the existing franchise to the Thameslink network in 2018, there are now four Metro routes serving Kent:

- London Charing Cross / Cannon Street via Woolwich to Dartford;
- London Charing Cross / Cannon Street / Victoria via Bexleyheath to Dartford / Gravesend;
- London Charing Cross / Cannon Street via Sidcup to Dartford / Gravesend;
- London Charing Cross / Cannon Street via Orpington to Sevenoaks.

7.2 These Metro services are an essential part of the rail network in Kent, providing access between Dartford, Gravesend and London, and between Sevenoaks and the capital. The existing service pattern provides a high level of frequency on all the Dartford routes, with a reasonable level on the route serving Sevenoaks. There might be an option to enhance this service frequency if the signalling upgrade identified in the section on rail infrastructure outputs is funded and delivered *[cf paragraph 5.4 (x)].*

TABLE 3: PROPOSED METRO SERVICES IN KENT

METRO ROUTE	PEAK TPH	OFF-PEAK TPH
London CX / CS via Woolwich to Dartford	4	2
London CX / CS / VIC via Bexleyheath to Dartford / Gravesend	6	4
London CX / CS via Sidcup to Dartford / Gravesend	4	4
London CX / CS via Orpington – all stations to Sevenoaks	3	2

These service levels only include trains serving Kent stations and do not include the total service levels within Greater London on each of these routes.

Mainline Services

7.3 The Kent and Medway Growth & Infrastructure Framework *[cf section 4]* has identified significant growth in population and housing up to 2031 at these key locations throughout mid and west Kent. They are all served by Mainline services and are certain to be subject to additional growth in passenger demand, although the stations in the Medway Towns are not included here as these are expected to be included in Medway Council's response to the consultation on the new South Eastern concession agreement. KCC works collaboratively with Medway Council on rail policy and supports that council's successful bid for funding for a new passenger service on the Hoo Peninsular (see paragraph 10.10), and which is now represented with KCC on the joint Kent Rail Liaison Group that includes representatives from the rail industry and Visit Kent.

- Faversham
- Sittingbourne
- Gravesend
- Dartford
- Maidstone
- West Malling
- Borough Green
- Otford
- Swanley
- Sevenoaks
- Tonbridge
- Tunbridge Wells

7.4 Any overall increase in the provision of Mainline services from these stations will be dependent on three key factors:

- The provision of sufficient paths to the London termini
- The provision of additional Mainline rolling-stock for peak period operation
- Signalling upgrade to enhance capacity on Orpington – Sevenoaks corridor

7.5 At present, the peak paths to and from the London termini used by Southeastern services are full, so the greatest opportunity for any Mainline service enhancement in the new concession will be in the strengthening of existing services in the off-peak and weekend periods.

7.6 There is significant overcrowding on some shoulder-peak services on Mainline routes, and also on late evening departures from London. These issues will need to be addressed by the new South Eastern concession agreement operator to ensure the delivery of greater capacity at these

times for rail passengers. As a minimum standard, all peak and shoulder-peak workings should be diagrammed as 11-cars or 12-cars wherever the power supply capability permits this.

7.7 There is a particular change advocated in this strategy for the Mainline service group via the Medway Towns. At present, as a result of the many conflicting demands to serve a multitude of stations from both routes east of Faversham, the journey times to and from London are unreasonably lengthy. The proposed change would introduce a much faster service from the Ramsgate route via Herne Bay, which would benefit from cross-platform interchange at Faversham with the service from Dover via Canterbury East.

7.8 This latter service would become a stopping service, doubling the frequency at all the stations between Faversham and Dover (except Canterbury East), and improving the regular service at Teynham and Newington. It would also provide an additional stop at Denmark Hill to serve King's College Hospital. Passengers from the Dover route wishing to benefit from a faster service to London would change trains at Faversham to the service from Ramsgate, and vice-versa.

7.9 There is also a change proposed to the service group via Ashford. Following the proposals by the Department for Transport (DfT) for the TSR for the cancelled South Eastern franchise, this strategy retains the option of 4tph on the Tonbridge – Ashford corridor in the standard off-peak hour, with 2tph fast on this section and then on to Ramsgate, and 2tph slow serving all the intermediate stations. This would encourage greater use of the fast Mainline services from East Kent stations, thereby alleviating pressure from excess demand on the High Speed network from these locations.

7.10 The route south of Tunbridge Wells towards Hastings also requires an uplift to the power supply on this section, so that 11-car or 12-car trains can be pathed in succession. At present the restricted power supply precludes such pathing, and thus diminishes capacity on this busy section of route in the peak periods.

Tables showing proposed Mainline service levels on routes to/from London Charing Cross, Cannon Street and Victoria

7.11 In the tables which follow, peak service frequencies are approximate representations of arrivals at / departures from London termini at high peak hours (08:00–09:00 & 17:00–18:00 respectively).

TABLE 4: PROPOSED MAINLINE SERVICES VIA MEDWAY TOWNS

MAINLINE ROUTE	PEAK TPH	OFF-PEAK TPH
FAST: Ramsgate – all stations to Faversham – Sittingbourne – Medway Towns – Bromley South – Victoria	2	1
FAST: Ramsgate – all stations to Faversham – Sittingbourne – Medway Towns – London Bridge - Cannon Street	3	0
SLOW: Dover – all stations via Canterbury East to Faversham – all stations to Bromley South – Denmark Hill – Victoria	2	2
SEMI-FAST: Sheerness – all stations to Rochester – Meopham – Longfield – Swanley - St Mary Cray - Bromley S - Vic	1	1

TABLE 5: PROPOSED MAINLINE SERVICES VIA TUNBRIDGE WELLS

MAINLINE ROUTE	PEAK TPH	OFF-PEAK TPH
FAST: Hastings – all stations* - High Brooms - fast to London Bridge - Charing X / Cannon Street	3	0
SEMI-FAST: Hastings - St Leonards WS – Battle – Wadhurst – Tunbridge Wells – High Brooms - Tonbridge – Sevenoaks – London Bridge/Charing X	0	1
SLOW: Hastings – all stations to Tonbridge – Sevenoaks London Bridge/Charing X	0	1
SEMI-FAST: Tunbridge Wells – all stations to Sevenoaks – Orpington – London Bridge Charing X / Cannon Street	3	2

**some trains join/divide en route to serve different stations between Hastings and Tunbridge Wells*

TABLE 6: PROPOSED MAINLINE SERVICES VIA ASHFORD

MAINLINE ROUTE	PEAK TPH	OFF-PEAK TPH
SEMI-FAST: Ramsgate – all stations via Dover or Canterbury West to Ashford – all stations to Tonbridge – Sevenoaks – London Bridge – CX/CS	4	0
FAST: Ramsgate – all stations via Dover or Canterbury West to Ashford – Paddock Wood – Tonbridge – Sevenoaks – London Bridge – Charing X	0	2
SLOW: Ashford – all stations to Sevenoaks – Orpington – London Bridge – Charing X	0	2

TABLE 7: PROPOSED MAINLINE SERVICES VIA MAIDSTONE EAST

MAINLINE ROUTE	PEAK TPH	OFF-PEAK TPH
SLOW: Ashford – all stations to Maidstone East – all stations to Otford# - Swanley - ^ - Bromley South/Victoria~	3	0
SEMI-FAST: Canterbury West – all stations to Ashford – *either* all stations to Maidstone East then skip-stop to Otford, *or* fast to Bearsted then all stations to Otford, then Swanley – ^ - Bromley South – Victoria	0	2

 # Some services skip-stop some stations in peak periods

~ This service plan presumes operation of Thameslink service between Maidstone East and Blackfriars, which will have subsumed existing peak Blackfriars services on this route

^ St Mary Cray is omitted from this service group as it would be served by slow services via Chatham to/from Sheerness and Dover (see table 4)

High Speed Services

7.12 The construction, delivery and successful operation of the HS1 rail infrastructure has been an outstanding success for Kent. It has transformed the economy of East Kent, creating a wide range of employment opportunities in Central London which were previously inaccessible, widening opportunities for higher education students to access university colleges in the capital, and growing the tourism and leisure industry in the county by contributing to the 65 million annual visitors to the Garden of England *[source: Visit Kent, 2020].*

7.13 In the report commissioned by HS1, 'Delivering for Kent: The Economic Impact of HS1' (Steer, September 2019) *[cf section 3: Kent's Local Transport Policy]*, the need for further growth in High Speed rail provision beyond 2021 was identified at these stations which are served by High Speed services in Kent (stations in Medway are expected to be covered by Medway Council's response to the new agreement consultation):

- Thanet Parkway (due to open in May 2023)
- Canterbury West
- Dover Priory
- Folkestone Central
- Folkestone West
- Westenhanger (to serve proposed Otterpool Park Garden Town)
- Ashford International
- Faversham
- Sittingbourne
- Maidstone West
- Ebbsfleet International
- Gravesend

7.14 In the peak periods this growth in demand will require the provision of additional capacity, with full-length operation of all peak services through an expanded High Speed fleet *[cf section 6: rolling-stock outputs required in Kent]*. In the off-peak periods this will need to be met by an increase in service levels from Canterbury West and Dover Priory via Ashford, and from Maidstone West via Strood, Gravesend and Ebbsfleet. KCC also supports the ongoing efforts of Dover District Council in securing a journey time between St Pancras and Dover Priory of under 60 minutes, and their efforts with Network Rail to increase car parking capacity at Dover Priory.

Kent & East Sussex Coastal Connectivity

7.15 East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and KCC are also working in partnership with Network Rail and HS1 Ltd on a project to deliver a connection between HS1 and the Marshlink line, and provided that this proposal for infrastructure enhancement at Ashford is funded HS services would then be able to operate between St Pancras and Eastbourne via Hastings and Bexhill. The project is designed to support economic growth in these coastal towns by delivering much faster journey times to and from London, while also increasing HS capacity at Ashford. The SOBC for the project is expected to be completed by April 2021.

TABLE 8: PROPOSED HIGH SPEED SERVICES

VIA ASHFORD WITHOUT INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES

HIGH SPEED ROUTE	**PEAK TPH**	**OFF-PEAK TPH**
Margate – Broadstairs – Ramsgate – Thanet Parkway – Canterbury West – Ashford – Ebbsfleet (off-peak) - Stratford - St Pancras	2	1
Ramsgate – Thanet Parkway - Sandwich – Deal - Dover – Folkestone C & W – Westenhanger# - Ashford – Ebbsfleet - Stratford – St Pancras	2	1

The provision of specific infrastructure upgrades would have a transformative effect on the level of High Seed services possible in East Kent, as is demonstrated by a comparison between tables 8 and 9.

TABLE 9: PROPOSED HIGH SPEED SERVICES

VIA ASHFORD WITH INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES

HIGH SPEED ROUTE	PEAK TPH	OFF-PEAK TPH
Margate – Broadstairs – Ramsgate – Thanet Parkway – Canterbury West – Ashford – Stratford - St Pancras	2	1
Canterbury West – Ashford – Ebbsfleet – Stratford – St Pancras~	1	1
Ramsgate – Thanet Parkway - Sandwich – Deal - Dover – Folkestone C & W – ^ - Stratford – St Pancras	1	1
Dover – Folkestone C & W – Westenhanger# - Ashford* - Ebbsfleet Stratford - St Pancras	1	1
Eastbourne – Bexhill – Hastings – Rye – Ashford* – Stratford – St Pancras	1	1

** when proposed infrastructure work at Ashford is funded and delivered, this service group will join and divide en route at Ashford, with front portion to/from Dover and rear portion to/from Hastings and Eastbourne*

 # this station will need to be served by High Speed services when Otterpool Park Garden Town reaches an agreed occupancy rate

~this service group could operate if an additional platform 3, in place of the existing down siding, was funded and delivered at Canterbury West

^ this service could operate if the proposed infrastructure enhancement at Dollands Moor, creating a link between HS1 and Mainline, is funded and delivered

Thanet Parkway Station

7.16 The new Thanet Parkway station is due to open in May 2023, providing a reduced journey time from Thanet to London which will be delivered in partnership with Network Rail. This will be in conjunction with the Journey Time Improvement (JTI) scheme between Ramsgate and Ashford, which will mitigate the time penalty of the additional station stop. The DfT will need to agree that the TSR for the new Southeastern Direct Award,

commencing in October 2021, requires all trains which pass the new station to stop there, both Mainline and High Speed services.

7.17 Timetable analysis undertaken by Network Rail has demonstrated that there would be no additional costs involved in terms of rolling-stock or crews, but that the existing round-the-loop High Speed service would need to have its stopping pattern adjusted to accommodate the new station. The High Speed service plan proposed here would separate the two parts of this service at Ramsgate, thereby improving operational resilience and accommodating the stop at Thanet Parkway on the southern leg of this service, which does not benefit from the JTI scheme.

Westenhanger Station and Otterpool Park Garden Town

7.18 The proposed Otterpool Park Garden Town development adjacent to Westenhanger station is expected to generate a significant increase in demand for rail services, principally to/from London but also locally to employment, further education and retail centres at Ashford and Folkestone. The current Transport Assessment for the new Garden Town provides an estimate of total journeys which would be made by rail based on the existing Mainline service, but to meet the predicted increase in demand the TSR for the new South Eastern concession agreement will need to accommodate the additional stops at Westenhanger on the High Speed service which are included in the proposed train service plan outlined above.

TABLE 10: PROPOSED HIGH SPEED SERVICES

VIA GRAVESEND

HIGH SPEED ROUTE	PEAK TPH	OFF-PEAK TPH
Ramsgate – principal stations to Faversham – Sittingbourne – Medway Towns – Gravesend - Ebbsfleet – Stratford – St Pancras	1	1
Ramsgate – principal stations to Faversham – Sittingbourne – Medway Towns – *fast to* Stratford – St Pancras	1	0
Faversham – Sittingbourne – Medway Towns – Gravesend - Ebbsfleet - Stratford – St Pancras	0	1
Maidstone West – Snodland – Strood – Gravesend – Ebbsfleet – Stratford – St Pancras**	2	1

*** The proposed all-day service to/from Maidstone West is based on platform lengthening at this station to accommodate 12-car HS trains, which would enable these services to provide additional capacity at Strood, Gravesend and Ebbsfleet while enabling half the peak service to/from Ramsgate to run fast between Rochester and Stratford*

TABLE 11: THAMESLINK SERVICES IN KENT

THAMESLINK ROUTE	PEAK TPH	OFF-PEAK TPH
Rainham – Medway Towns – Gravesend – Dartford – Woolwich – Thameslink Core – Luton *[some stopping stations omitted from list]*	2	2
Sevenoaks – Bat & Ball – all stations to Elephant & Castle – Blackfriars – (*Thameslink Core – Welwyn Garden City:* ***service to be confirmed****)*	2	2
(*Ashford / Bearsted at start and end of day)* – Maidstone East – West Malling - Borough Green & Wrotham - Otford – Swanley – Bromley South – Elephant & Castle – Blackfriars ***(service to be confirmed)***	2	2

8. Passenger Communications and Station Facilities in Kent

Passenger Communications

8.1 One of the most frequent issues to be raised by passenger groups and rail user associations is the need for a unified approach in the dissemination of information to passengers, especially when there is disruption to rail services. This is one of the leading issues which the operator of the new South Eastern concession will need to develop, building on the recent excellent improvements in this area delivered by Southeastern.

8.2 The roll out of unified communications to passengers is the right approach to ensure that both staff and passengers receive consistent information that aligns with the station VDUs and other public information available. Surety and consistency of messages is the best way to impart information about delayed or disrupted rail services to passengers when circumstances require, and a unified communication policy will deliver that outcome. The continued development of this unified approach to communications should be one of the key requirements in the next South Eastern concession agreement.

Station Facilities

8.3 In general stations and their environments should be recognised as gateways to the towns, villages and environments they serve. Stations should be clean, tidy and efficient, and as far as practicable those close to major employment areas should reflect their business location.

8.4 Stations should ideally be designed to encourage easy interchange with other sustainable modes, such as bus, riverboat, walking and cycling, supported by through ticketing initiatives with other service providers. The recent roll out of wi-fi facilities on all train services to enable business activity while commuting is also a welcome development, which reflects the increased prevalence of rail passengers to work while travelling.

8.5 There are additional aspirations for all stations to include, wherever possible, the following passenger facilities:

- Bus Interchange: there must be improved bus/rail interchange at railway stations, to promote the use of public transport and to enable ease of transfer between bus and rail for passengers. KCC wishes to improve integration between rail and bus through high quality infrastructure and passenger information, and the County Council sees this being achieved through close liaison between the relevant District / Borough Councils, KCC and passenger service operators. This is especially important with respect to timetabling, so that wherever possible bus and rail services are scheduled to connect to improve the end to end journey experience.

- Car Parking: there is significant increased demand for additional car parking capacity at a number of stations across the Kent rail network. Some of this demand is current, and some will be driven by the proposed service enhancements set out above. At the very least, some stations will need to be assessed for decking to provide multi-level parking at their existing car parks, while others will need to expand provision of existing ground level parking wherever this is possible. There is also a need to install electric vehicle charging points at station car parks, to reflect the recent increase in the use of electric and hybrid vehicles and to further encourage their use by passengers accessing the rail network by car.

- Cycle parking: improved quantity and security of cycle parking at all stations, building on Southeastern's successful investment in secure cycle hubs at locations such as Gravesend, Ashford, Canterbury West and Tonbridge. There are also plans for new cycle hubs in 2020/21 at Chatham, Folkestone West and Maidstone East. KCC would encourage any future service operator to continue to utilise the DfT's Cycle Rail Fund, as this funding stream has so far proved extremely beneficial in improving cycle storage provisions.

- Heritage: it is appropriate for stations in historic locations to reflect their local heritage. This can take the form of suitable advertising and signing on station sites, to direct links between a station and a local tourist attraction (e.g. Bearsted and its bus link to Leeds Castle).

- Signposting: station signs should be clear and unambiguous, from station name-plates to signing between the station, local bus stops and the town or village centre.

- Ticket machines: ticket vending machines offering the full range of tickets available from each station, with the same range of fares available from these, from the ticket office or online.

- Toilets: station toilet facilities should be clean, physically accessible for all age groups, those with disabilities, carers and those pregnant or travelling with babies or very young children, regularly inspected, well-lit and, critically, open for the duration of passenger services.

- Waiting facilities: every station should have a place to wait that is comfortable, warm and safe. Waiting facilities should be well lit, with good all-round visibility to assure travellers that they are safe.

First & Last Mile Study (F&LMS)

8.6 Network Rail and Southeastern have been working with KCC on a 'First & Last Mile' modular study, looking at the opportunities for better integration between rail and other modes. This will support further work being undertaken by TfSE and is concerned with improving sustainable access to stations by bus, walking and cycling, as well as providing better parking capacity at stations where this encourages travel by rail.

Mobility as a Service (MaaS)

8.7 In partnership with Southeastern and other transport providers, KCC is working towards a Mobility as a Service (MaaS) pilot for Ebbsfleet which is due to start in 2021. The MaaS platform will enable users to plan and purchase any journey that starts or finishes in Ebbsfleet via a single platform. MaaS will combine a multitude of different modes, including rail, bus, cycle hire, car clubs and walking routes. Through a single journey product, users will achieve better value for money, and they will also be rewarded with other incentives for making sustainable journey choices over private car use. If successful, MaaS will be rolled out across the whole of Kent by 2025.

8.8 Network Rail welcomes continued engagement with the F&LMS and MaaS projects, on which the infrastructure provider is working alongside train operators and stakeholders. The F&LMS considers how users and potential users can better access the railway across Network Rail's Southern Region, providing better first and last mile connectivity for customers, supporting an integrated transport network, and encouraging modal shift from road to the cleaner transport provided by rail. This study will also research accessibility and inclusivity of the rail network in the Southern Region and consider how this can be improved. Network Rail welcomes all opportunities to work more closely with KCC to explore the results of this study and to consider changes likely to impact upon modal shift from road to rail and the development of a sustainable transport infrastructure within the county. Along with MaaS, this offers a great opportunity to offer a better service to users across the county.

9. Community Rail Partnerships in Kent

9.1 KCC has been committed to the two Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) which have been operating in Kent for several years and will continue to support both the Kent and Southeast CRPs. These CRPs continue to promote and support the more lightly used routes in Kent, and also those which cross the county borders into East Sussex and Surrey. Following Southeastern's recently confirmed increase in funding of an additional £400,000 over two years for CRPs, which should be continued in future years by the new South Eastern operator, there are now 9 lines wholly or partly in Kent, managed through 5 separate partnerships:

i Medway Valley Line (Kent CRP)
ii SwaleRail (Kent CRP)
iii NEW: Maidstone East line (Kent CRP)
iv Sevenoaks to Swanley (Darent Valley CRP)
v Redhill to Tonbridge (Southeast CRP)
vi Marshlink (Southeast CRP)
vii NEW: Tonbridge to Hastings (Southeast CRP)
viii NEW: All stations in Thanet (Thanet CRP)
ix NEW: Westenhanger to Sandwich (White Cliffs CRP)

Kent Community Rail Partnership

9.2 There are two lines in Kent which will continue to be supported by the Kent CRP:

- Medway Valley Line (Strood – Maidstone West - Tonbridge)
- Swale Rail (Sittingbourne – Sheerness-on-Sea)

There is also one new line in Kent which is supported by the Kent CRP:

- Maidstone East line (Otford via Maidstone East to Ashford) – see paragraph 9.15

<u>Medway Valley Line</u>

9.3 The operator of the new South Eastern concession would be expected to continue the current high level of support for both routes associated with the Kent CRP, including the provision of an all-day extension of the Medway Valley service to and from Tonbridge. KCC and the Kent CRP strongly supported the proposal by the DfT, in the TSR for the cancelled South Eastern franchise in 2017, which proposed a doubling of the off-peak frequency between Maidstone West and Tonbridge. In this scenario, one train would operate non-stop between the county town and Paddock Wood and then Tonbridge, substantially improving connectivity between Maidstone and Tonbridge. This enhanced level of service should also restore the regular direct link through to Tonbridge, rather than as at present most trains terminating at Paddock Wood.

9.4 There is also a need to improve connectivity at Strood for passengers travelling between Maidstone and Medway. There is at present a high incidence of trains just missing each other for passengers needing this link in both directions. The new South Eastern concession agreement timetable must adjust timings to ensure these connections are maintained.

Swale Rail

9.5 The Swale Rail service has recently benefitted from the introduction of Class 375/3 rolling-stock, which, as with a recent similar improvement on the Medway Valley line, has improved passenger comfort and accessibility on this route. The existing connections at Sittingbourne should be maintained and improved wherever possible, and the existing through peak services between Sheerness and London Victoria should continue.

9.6 This rail strategy also proposes that the through service to London is operated hourly throughout the day by extending the current Gillingham starters to/from Sheerness. This would greatly improve connectivity to and from the Isle of Sheppey and thereby reduce the sense of isolation that is sometimes prevalent for residents of the island. At the request of the Kent CRP, there should also be a later service between Sittingbourne and Sheerness to enable passengers to travel home to the Isle of Sheppey after leisure or work activities.

Southeast Community Rail Partnership

9.7 There are two cross-county lines which continue to be supported by KCC through the Southeast Community Rail Partnership Ltd: Marshlink, which operates between Ashford and Hastings via Rye; and Tonbridge to Redhill, which operates via Edenbridge.

Marshlink Line

9.8 The Marshlink CRP between Ashford and Hastings, although not included in the scope of the South Eastern concession agreement, is managed by the Southeast CRP Ltd. This CRP route will need to support the smaller stations such as Ham Street and Appledore, which would continue to be served by a local stopping service when and if High Speed trains are introduced between Ashford, Hastings and Eastbourne. There is also scope for increased leisure travel on the Marshlink route, with Rye and Hastings both attractive destinations for passengers from London via High Speed services and well timed connections with Marshlink at Ashford.

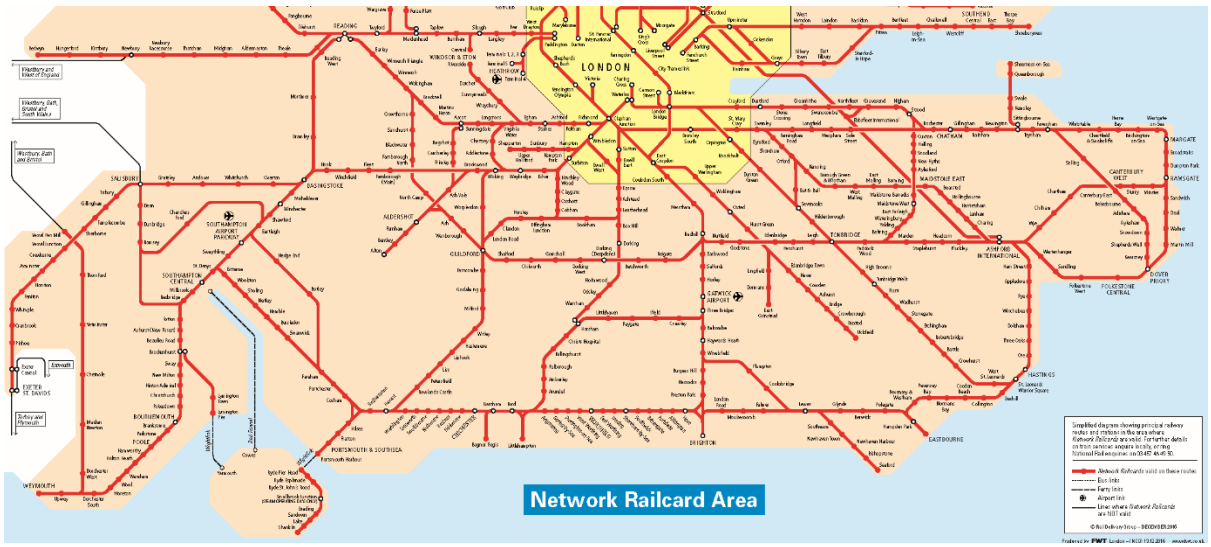
Tonbridge-Redhill Line

9.9 The Tonbridge to Redhill CRP, which is also outside the scope of the South Eastern concession agreement, links Kent with Surrey and is also managed by Southeast CRP Ltd. At present there is just a shuttle service on this route between Tonbridge and Redhill, but the route does provide

an innovative opportunity for the development of the south-east regional rail network.

9.10 Both KCC, and the shadow authority Transport for the South East, have identified the need for a new regional rail service that would link together the counties of south-east England outside Greater London with each other and with Gatwick Airport. Such a service could be introduced by extending the existing GWR Reading – Guildford – Dorking - Redhill – Gatwick service via Redhill – Edenbridge – Tonbridge - Ashford to Canterbury West, and this CRP route would play a key role in its operation.

9.11 The introduction of bi-mode rolling stock now being deployed across the railway network would resolve the problem of gaps in the electric power system on sections of this route. The map below includes the potential route of this proposed regional railway service.



Map of Network Railcard Area which includes route of potential regional rail service linking Reading with Canterbury West via Guildford, Dorking, Redhill, Gatwick, Redhill, Edenbridge, Tonbridge and Ashford

New Community Rail Partnerships and Lines

Following the additional funding provided by Southeastern for CRPs, a number of new partnerships and lines have now been established in Kent *[see paragraph 9.1]:*

Darent Valley CRP

9.12 A recent innovation has been the creation of the Darent Valley CRP. This CRP is not part of the Kent CRP but is led by Sevenoaks Town Council and Sevenoaks District Council, in partnership with Southeastern and Govia Thameslink Railway. It serves stations between Swanley and Sevenoaks via Eynsford, Shoreham, Otford and Bat & Ball, and provides a focus for local supporters of the Thameslink and Southeastern services on this short section of route.

Thanet CRP

9.13 Another newly formed CRP is the Thanet CRP, managed by the Turner Contemporary in partnership with Thanet District Council. This partnership comprises all existing seven stations in Thanet and should also include Thanet Parkway once this station is opened in 2023.

White Cliffs CRP

9.14 The East Kent coast route from Sandwich to Westenhanger inclusive has also become a CRP, managed by Dover District Council in partnership with Folkestone & Hythe District Council.

Maidstone East Line

9.15 Kent CRP has also expanded its portfolio to include a new community rail line between Otford and Ashford International via Maidstone East, as well as the continuation and enhancement of activity on the Medway Valley line and 'Swale Rail' branch between Sittingbourne and Sheerness-on-Sea.

Tonbridge to Hastings Line

9.16 Southeast CRP has also added another line to its portfolio, between Tonbridge and Hastings. This route links at Tonbridge with the CRP line to Redhill and with the Medway Valley CRP line to Strood, and also at Hastings with the Marshlink CRP line to Ashford.

10. Rail Freight Services in Kent

10.1 The provision of rail freight paths through Kent is a complex issue, as there are no easy solutions to the constant demand for modal shift of freight from road to rail. Essentially there are three principal issues which mitigate any significant further modal shift without either considerable expenditure on re-building railway infrastructure, or a substantial increase in the use of HS1 by rail freight trains:

- there is overwhelming demand for paths on Mainline routes in Kent to be prioritised for passenger services, especially during peak periods but increasingly during off-peak periods as well;
- there is only a limited number of routes in Kent currently cleared to WR8 gauge for freight operation on Mainline routes, with some combination of alternative routes available;
- the higher Continental gauge container wagons, demand for the use of which is increasing, require clearance to WR12 gauge and paths for this gauge of train can only be allocated on HS1.

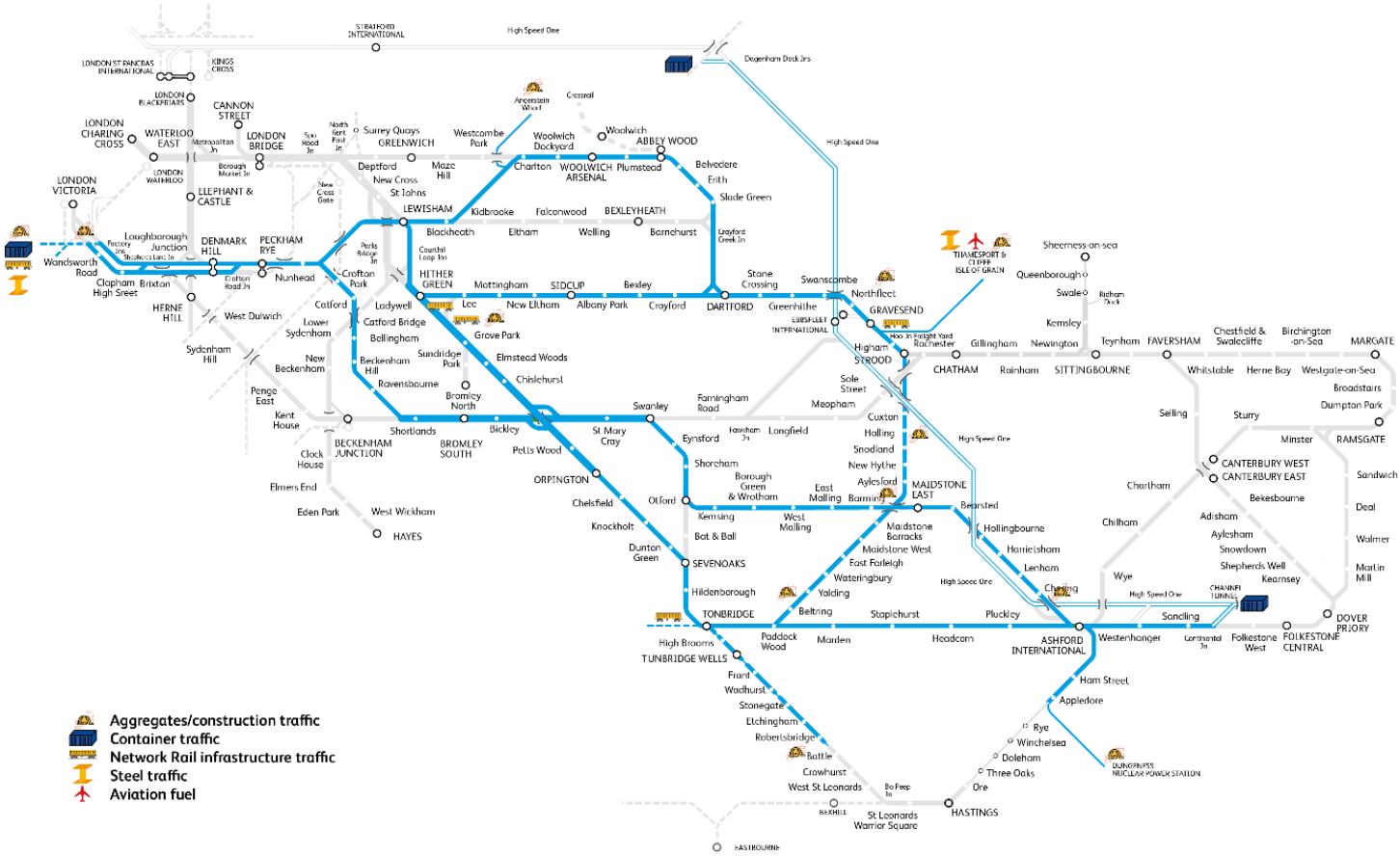
10.2 Rail freight policy is by its nature a very specialised subject, and therefore the narrative and commentary for this section is drawn substantially from Network Rail's own policy for rail freight published in its Kent Area Route Study in 2018. Network Rail supports opportunities to increase rail freight on the network and is undertaking a strategic study to look at current and future demand and the capacity constraints that prevent additional freight operating. This study also supports the aspiration of the decarbonisation agenda to deliver modal shift of freight from road to rail.

Rail Freight Paths

[source: 'South East Route: Kent Area Route Study', Network Rail, System Operator, May 2018]

10.3 The Kent Area Route Study clearly sets out the existing series of freight routes and terminals serving Kent. Rail freight operators using these facilities include DB Cargo, GB Railfreight, Freightliner, Direct Rail Services and Colas Rail. There is a small number of approved rail freight routes in the county, providing a guaranteed number of freight paths each operating day. These are indicated in blue on the route map below.

Map Showing Rail Freight Routes and Terminals in Kent



[source: Network Rail, Kent Area Route Study, May 2018, figure 3.4]

10.4 The majority of rail freight paths in Kent are utilised by construction and international traffic routed via the Channel Tunnel, with marshalling and locomotive power exchanges at Dollands Moor freight terminal which is adjacent to the UK Channel Tunnel portal. This type of freight includes raw materials for concrete such as sand and aggregates, with other heavy duty material associated with construction sites. Network Rail is also a significant rail freight user, with their facilities at Hither Green, Hoo and Tonbridge used for the acceptance, maintenance and distribution of on-track machines, rail treatment trains and engineering equipment. All these are essential to ensure the safe and efficient maintenance of the railway network in Kent.

10.5 One other quite distinct service supplied by freight operators is the provision of steam and diesel locomotives and crews for the regular charter trains which operate between London Victoria and the Kent coast. The most famous is the Belmond (formerly Venice-Simplon) Orient Express, and others include day excursions operated by Steam Dreams to Canterbury and the East Kent coast.

Rail Freight Gauge Clearance

[source: 'South East Route: Kent Area Route Study', Network Rail, System Operator, May 2018]

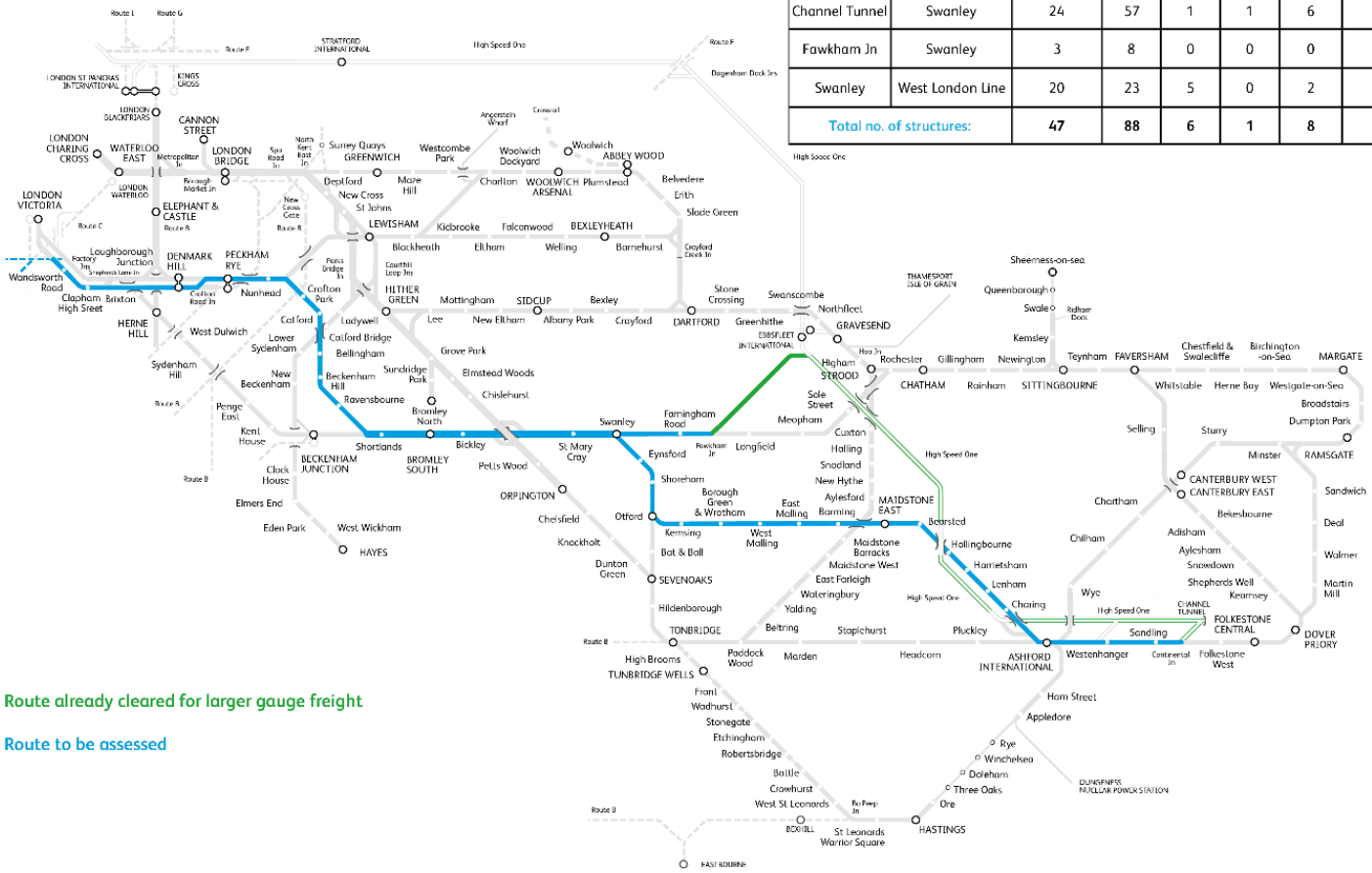
10.6 The Kent Area Route Study also considers the issue of gauge clearance on different rail freight routes through Kent. The main routes currently identified and cleared for freight operation are:

- Channel Tunnel via Maidstone East to Swanley
- Channel Tunnel via HS1 to Southfleet, HS1 link to Fawkham Junction, Mainline to Swanley
  (and then for both via Catford Loop and Atlantic Lines to West London Line)
- Channel Tunnel via Tonbridge to Redhill (and then via Clapham Junction to West London Line)
- Channel Tunnel via HS1 to Barking freight terminal

10.7 With the exception of the last route listed which is entirely on HS1 and so can accommodate up to WR12 gauge clearance, at present all the other routes can only accommodate freight traffic up to WR8 gauge clearance. Network Rail has now completed work to GRIP 2 on freight train clearances to W12 on these routes, while the business case is still being considered. In recent years there has been significant growth in 'high cube' container traffic, but only the HS1 route through Kent can accommodate these larger units. These require specialist pocket wagons which hold the containers between the bogies of the wagon, but the clearance of Mainline routes in Kent to accommodate these would require wholesale rebuilding of tunnels, bridges and other structures and would be prohibitively expensive. The map below indicates these freight gauge assessments.

Map Showing Rail Freight Route Gauge Assessments in Kent

Route section		Number of structures					
From	To	Footbridges	Road bridges	Rail bridges	River bridges	Tunnels	Buildings
Channel Tunnel	Swanley	24	57	1	1	6	0
Fawkham Jn	Swanley	3	8	0	0	0	0
Swanley	West London Line	20	23	5	0	2	4
Total no. of structures:		47	88	6	1	8	4



[source: Network Rail, Kent Area Route Study, May 2018, figure 6.17]

10.8 The TfSE transport strategy recognises the fact that rail freight's modal share is relatively low, and that freight distribution is disrupted by congestion on many strategic road corridors in the south-east. The key question for this rail strategy is also posed by TfSE: what rail freight schemes are required to increase modal share of freight by rail, and how can these be afforded? As has been demonstrated by Network Rail's own Kent Route Study above, the required gauge clearance works on Mainline routes through Kent should be considered for the longer term and retained as future options to facilitate increased modal share for rail freight in Kent.

10.9 The most feasible short-term policy therefore is to ensure the full utilisation of the existing rail freight paths, including a real and substantive increase in the use of HS1 between the Channel Tunnel and Barking freight terminal by WR12 gauge containers between Continental Europe and the UK. This would deliver at least some of the modal shift required by using existing spare capacity on HS1, which at present carries only a very small proportion of rail freight traffic through Kent.

10.10 Within the area serviced by Medway Council, the freight line from Hoo Junction to the Isle of Grain is the subject of a successful bid to the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) by Medway Council in partnership with Network Rail. This project will deliver an upgrade to the freight line between its junction with the Mainline at Hoo Junction and a new station which will serve a new housing development in the vicinity of Hoo St Werburgh. The planned station will be on the site of the original Sharnal Street station on the old passenger route between Gravesend and Allhallows-on-Sea, which closed to passenger services in 1961 but on which the author of this strategy clearly remembers travelling by steam train in the Summer of 1960. This project is an excellent example of the successful leverage of Government funding driven by planned housing growth to support the local economy through a significant enhancement to the passenger rail network.

11. International Rail Services in Kent

11.1 The commencement of international rail services in Kent since 1996 has transformed the economic and leisure opportunities for residents, businesses and visitors in the county. Eurostar International Limited (EIL) initially served only Ashford International in Kent on its routes to Paris Gare du Nord, and to Calais Frethun, Lille Europe and Brussels Midi, but when HS1 was completed in November 2007 and the new Ebbsfleet International station opened shortly afterwards, service levels at Ashford International were drastically reduced.

11.2 At the same time, KCC, working in partnership with Ashford Borough Council (ABC), Network Rail, HS1 Ltd, EIL and the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), identified a critical gap in the signalling / train protection infrastructure required at Ashford to serve the new fleet of Siemens built Class 374 (e320) trains which EIL had started to deliver at pace in 2014/15. With the provision of the majority of the funding from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), and with over eight years of strong partnership collaboration in which several complex technical issues were successfully overcome, the required infrastructure was delivered and commissioned in December 2019. Despite all the challenges throughout that period EIL maintained their faith in the partnership that a result would be delivered, evidenced by the continuous provision of international services at Ashford during this time.

11.3 EIL had planned to restore its previous level of service from Ashford to Paris (three daily), while retaining the existing daily services to Brussels and to Disneyland Paris, as well as the seasonal services to the French ski resorts and to Marseilles, with effect from the May 2020 timetable. The COVID-19 pandemic stalled those plans, and EIL has subsequently announced the suspension of its services at both Ebbsfleet and Ashford until at least 2022. This latest news was a great disappointment to all who value the superb connectivity and environmentally friendly service that Eurostar provides, and the Leaders of KCC, ABC, SELEP and the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce immediately arranged a virtual meeting with the Chief Executive of Eurostar and his senior colleagues. EIL does understand the critical nature of its services to both Kent stations and the wider communities they serve and has given a verbal assurance that EIL will return to serving both Kent stations once commercial conditions permit. In the meantime, all the authorities concerned will continue to engage in constructive dialogue with EIL, to ensure that Kent's international services do indeed return to their normal service levels as soon as possible. Furthermore, the juxtaposed border controls will continue as previously even though the UK has now left the EU's Customs Union and Single Market, whereby passengers are checked through passport and customs controls for both the UK and EU (Schengen Area) at the start of their journeys in both directions.

11.4 Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, EIL and Thalys (the operator of international services between Paris, Brussels, Cologne and Amsterdam) agreed a merger with the working title “Green Speed”. The objective is to unify the operations of these two international rail providers, delivering simpler through ticketing, improved loyalty schemes and an eco-friendly approach through use of renewable energy and sustainable purchasing.

Eurostar Class e320 at Ashford International, *en route* from Paris Gare du Nord to London St Pancras International, following completion of the Ashford Spurs project, 12 December 2019 *[source: Mark Ellerby]*

11.5 KCC, together with partners ABC, will continue to present the case for further enhancements to the level of service provided at Ashford International. Once the restrictive measures required by the present emergency are over and the previous levels of service have been restored at both Ebbsfleet and Ashford, KCC and ABC will again make the case to EIL for the provision of a second daily service between Ashford, Lille and Brussels, complementing the single existing daily service and thereby facilitating more flexible journeys between Kent, the Hauts-de-France

region and the Belgian capital. Such an improvement would further support an increase in the number of jobs which have been created since 1996 in Ashford, entirely due to the location of international rail services in the town, as well as supporting the wider tourism and leisure sector in Kent with benefits for residents, businesses and visitors to the county.

11.6 Both authorities also support the aspiration of a future stop at Ashford on the new London – Amsterdam service operated by Eurostar. Once the normal service level resumes there will be four daily journeys which at present run non-stop between London and Brussels, but Eurostar also intends to operate a fifth daily service when commercial conditions make this a viable option. It is this service which could serve Ashford and Lille on its route to Brussels and Amsterdam, and KCC and ABC will continue to present the case for this enhancement to the range of international services available in Kent.

11.7 There was also a proposal in 2014 from Deutsche Bahn (DB) for a new through service between London and Frankfurt via Brussels and Cologne, and KCC did at that time propose a stop at Ashford if this service were to have been introduced. However, since then DB has not advanced this idea as there does not appear to be a commercial case for the service, but if the proposal were ever to be resurrected KCC and ABC would again make the case for a stop at Ashford.

12. Conclusion

12.1 The principal purpose of this Kent Rail Strategy 2021 is to influence the infrastructure outputs, rolling-stock fleet and rail service specifications which will inform the next South Eastern concession agreement, for the operation of Kent's rail passenger network for at least the next decade.

12.2 Specifically, to ensure the delivery of this outcome, this strategy sets out these ambitions for that next South Eastern concession:

- To determine the required passenger service levels in each sector of the network: High Speed, Mainline and Metro
- To set out the requirements for rail infrastructure enhancements to facilitate these levels of service
- To establish the requirements for new fleets of rolling-stock in each sector to enable these service levels to be realised
- To improve the provision of passenger station facilities and communications.

12.3 In proposing a clear series of outputs to ensure the fulfilment of these outcomes, this rail strategy has set out its key objectives. The essential next step is to successfully influence the new Train Service Requirement for the next South Eastern concession agreement. This will need political as well as technical support, and the greater the extent to which Kent's political voice is united, the greater will be the success in achieving this goal.

12.4 While the publication of the Williams Rail Review is still awaited, the pre-publication headlines were very clear: to move away from the franchise model for train operators, and to develop greater integration between track and train. This close working partnership was been successfully developed by Southeastern and Network Rail's Kent Route over several years. It should be deepened further, with a clear commitment from both parties to develop a unified railway operation of the Kent rail network.

12.5 Finally, in the introduction to the 'Rail Action Plan for Kent 2011' which was published to inform the then expected new franchise award in 2014, this was the concluding narrative:

"KCC does not pretend to know all the answers, but the County Council does value highly its dual role: to develop a strategic rail network which will help to deliver the economic growth we need during the next 30 years; and to represent the genuine aspirations of Kent's travelling public, standing up for the people of Kent. It is these twin goals that this Rail Action Plan for Kent seeks to deliver".

Ten years later, with a new South Eastern concession agreement award now expected in the early 2020s, and with national rail policy on the cusp of further major change, those same objectives remain. And it is to meet those objectives that KCC presents this 'Kent Rail Strategy 2021'.

Stephen Gasche
Rail Project Manager
Kent County Council

January 2021

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Rail Policy

Deliver modal shift across passenger and freight sectors to ensure that rail contributes to a reduction in pollutants and a consequent improvement in air quality

New operator to continue work by Visit Kent coordinating and promoting 2-for-1 ticket offers at attractions for those who travel by rail

Seek commitment from DfT to increase funding for further investment in 'Access for All' facilities at stations to accelerate delivery of an accessible rail network in Kent

Unified approach to passenger communications to be one of the key requirements in the next South Eastern concession agreement

Station design to encourage easy interchange with other sustainable modes, such as bus, riverboat, walking and cycling, supported by through ticketing initiatives

Fares Policy

Rail fares should rise by no more than CPI, and not RPI, so that CPI becomes the new measure of annual regulated fares, i.e. CPI + 0%

Higher rate increase of 2.6% proposed for March 2021 should be reversed and replaced with new standard rate increase based on CPI + 0%

More flexible fare options such as part-week season tickets could also be facilitated using Smart ticketing technology

There should be a new option of 'shoulder-peak' fares, offering those who travel just outside the core peak hours are offered a 'shoulder-peak' fare

The level of High Speed premium fare should be reviewed as part of the new financial agreement between the DfT and the operator of the new agreement

Expand the current 'super off-peak' offer, promoting these fares for travel later on weekdays and all day at weekends and public holidays

Develop Smart and Mobile forms of ticketing with a 'best price' promise, extending the existing "Key" smart ticketing initiative to individual journeys

When technology and operator agreement enables it, a new 'Kent Smartcard' scheme should be delivered to incorporate bus and rail travel across the county

London Zonal fares should be extended to Dunton Green and equivalent North Kent stations, with Sevenoaks having a special fare integrated with London Zonal fares

Support proposal from Rail Future for weekday contra-peak fares at off-peak prices, including railcard discounts, to enable longer days away, especially from London

Rail Infrastructure Enhancements

To seek funding for delivery of these options in Network Rail's Kent Area Route Study [references are to paragraphs in the Route Study]

- Marshlink (6.13.2)
- Ebbsfleet Southern link (6.13.26)
- North Kent to South Kent (6.13.29)
- Canterbury Chord – Resilience (6.13.32)
- Thanet Parkway Station (6.15.8)
- Westenhanger Station (6.15.22)
- Maidstone West – platform extensions (6.7.4)
- Maidstone East and Swanley – station improvements (being progressed)
- Power Upgrades: to permit regular 12-car operation
- Signalling Upgrade: Sevenoaks to Orpington
- Canterbury West Station: additional platform
- Dollands Moor: new connection between High Speed & Mainline routes

KCC to participate in new Continuous Modular Strategic Planning method which presents an opportunity to participate in the formation of policy for the rail network

Rolling-Stock Improvements

Support the DfT in the approval of the procurement of a new fleet of Class 800/801 or similar HS rolling-stock

Complete refurbishment programme for cascaded Electrostar fleet for Mainline services

Procure a replacement Metro fleet for the remainder of the Networker trains for the Metro services

Passenger Services

Increase capacity of HS services at Ebbsfleet, Ashford, Maidstone West, North Kent and East Kent stations with additional fleet of HS rolling-stock

Support the initiative to ensure delivery of the additional connectivity and capacity required by planned growth at Ebbsfleet, Gravesham and Dartford

Enhance Sevenoaks Metro service frequency if the signalling upgrade identified in the strategy is funded and delivered

All peak and shoulder-peak workings on Tonbridge and Chatham mainlines should be diagrammed as 11 or 12-cars wherever the power supply capability permits this

Rail Minister to approve the operation of Maidstone East section of the Thameslink service programme, with all-day service between the county town and Blackfriars

Faster service from Ramsgate route via Herne Bay, which would benefit from cross-platform interchange at Faversham with service from Dover via Canterbury East

Dover via Canterbury East to London to become a stopping service, doubling the frequency at minor stations between Faversham and Dover

New operator to provide 4tph on Tonbridge – Ashford corridor in standard off-peak hour, with 2tph fast then to Ramsgate, and 2tph slow serving intermediate stations

Route south of Tunbridge Wells towards Hastings also requires an uplift to the power supply on this section, so that 11-car or 12-car trains can be pathed in succession

Extend HS service to operate between St Pancras and Eastbourne via Hastings and Bexhill provided funding is secured for infrastructure required at Ashford

Thanet Parkway to have requirement in new TSR for all trains which pass the new station to stop there, both Mainline and High Speed services

Westenhanger to have requirement in new TSR for station stop on all HS services which pass to serve Otterpool Park Garden Town

Obtain support from TfSE for new inter-regional service by extending existing GWR Reading – Gatwick service via Redhill to Tonbridge - Ashford - Canterbury West

Community Rail Partnerships

Commit to financial support for, and engagement with, the Kent Community Rail Partnership (CRP) and, for cross-county routes, the Southeast CRP

Improve connectivity at Strood for passengers travelling between Maidstone and Medway.

Maintain existing connections at Sittingbourne with Swale branch, and the existing through peak services between Sheerness and London Victoria to operate all day

Marshlink CRP route to support smaller stations at Ham Street and Appledore, which will need to be served by a local stopping service if HS trains are introduced

Rail Freight Provision

Long-term policy would require gauge clearance works on Mainline routes through Kent as a future option to facilitate increased modal share for rail freight in Kent

Most feasible short-term policy for rail freight is to ensure full utilisation of existing rail freight paths, including increase in use of HS1 by continental gauge containers

International Rail Services

KCC and ABC to continue to engage with Eurostar to ensure restoration of full services at Ebbsfleet and Ashford as soon as commercial conditions permit

KCC and ABC to present case for further enhancements to level of service provided at Ashford, including second daily service between Ashford, Lille and Brussels

KCC and ABC also to support aspiration of a future stop at Ashford on additional daily London – Amsterdam service when introduced by Eurostar

Glossary of Railway Terminology

Agreement	Generic term used in rail strategy for next concession between DfT and new TOC
CMSP	Continuous Modular Strategic Planning, a strategy to meet the capacity and connectivity requirements for rail for the medium to long term
Community Rail Partnership	Line based partnership to support rail services and stations on routes with community involvement
Concession	New form of agreement between DfT and TOC for agreed period in which DfT determines operating requirements and retains revenue risk
Contract	Previous form of management contract between DfT and TOC in which DfT retains revenue risk
ERMA	Emergency Recovery Measures Agreement, a temporary agreement between DfT and TOC in response to greatly reduced demand due to COVID-19 pandemic
Franchise	Previous model of agreement between DfT and TOC, now all to be replaced with new concessions
HS	High Speed domestic rail services operating between London St Pancras and Kent
HS1 Ltd	High Speed 1 Ltd, the operator of the High Speed rail route between London and the Channel Tunnel
Mobile Ticketing	Use of mobile phones to book, pay for and download rail tickets
Smart Ticketing	Use of new technology to book, pay for and download tickets for multi-modal journeys
South Eastern	Name of operating area for new concession for rail service in Kent, East Sussex and SE London
Southeastern	Trading name of existing operator, London & South Eastern Railway Limited
TfL	Transport for London
TfSE	Transport for the South-East, the new shadow sub-national transport body

TOC	Train Operating Company
TSR	Train Service Requirement in the Invitation to Tender for the new South Eastern concession
VDUs	Visual Display Units
Williams Rail Review	Review led by Keith Williams into structure and financing of rail franchises and wider rail industry

Sources

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Map of electrification capacity, Kent Route (Network Rail, Kent Area Route Study, May 2018)

Map of Kent Rail Network (John Luckcock, April 2011)

Map of Network Railcard Area (Network Railcard application form, Jan 2017)

Map of rail freight routes and terminals in Kent (Network Rail, Kent Area Route Study, May 2018)

Map of rail freight route gauge assessments in Kent (Network Rail, Kent Area Route Study, May 2018)

Photograph of Class e320 train (Mark Ellerby, Dec 2019)

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Photographs of Class 800 test trains (Hitachi Ltd, 2015)

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Response to the DfT's South Eastern Rail Franchise public consultation (KCC, May 2017)

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South East Route: Kent Area Route Study – Advice for Funders (Network Rail, System Operator, May 2018)

Transport Strategy for the South East: Executive Summary (Transport for the South East, Oct 2019)

Tables

Maps

Appendix A - Proposed Service Specifications

Contents

Scope of service specifications

New South Eastern concession agreement services planned to serve Kent on High Speed, Mainline and Metro networks

Includes seven stations located in Medway Council area

Services operated by GTR Thameslink and GTR Southern are included as part of the full passenger network in Kent, and are shown only where these serve Kent stations

High Speed via Ashford

Trains per hour (tph)	Peak Periods (Peak direction)		Off-Peak periods	
Terminus / Via:	St Pancras	Stratford	St Pancras	Stratford
Departure Station				
Ebbsfleet ~	8	8	7	7
Ashford $	5	5	4	4
Canterbury West $	3	3	2	2
Westenhanger X	2	2	1	1
Folkestone West	2	2	2	2
Folkestone Central	2	2	2	2
Dover Priory	2	2	2	2
Martin Mill	1	1	1	1
Walmer	1	1	1	1
Deal	1	1	1	1
Sandwich	1	1	1	1
Thanet Parkway ^	3	3	2	2
Ramsgate	3	3	2	2
Broadstairs	2	2	1	1
Margate	2	2	1	1
Rye #	1	1	1	1
Hastings #	1	1	1	1

Trains per hour (tph)	Peak Periods (Peak direction)		Off-Peak periods	
Terminus / Via:	St Pancras	Stratford	St Pancras	Stratford
Departure Station				
St Leonards WS #	1	1	1	1
Bexhill #	1	1	1	1
Eastbourne #	1	1	1	1

~ includes service via Medway

^ planned to open in 2023

 # service level to East Sussex stations to commence when infrastructure works at Ashford and Marshlink upgrade completed

X service level to commence when re-built station completed, and dwelling occupation threshold reached at Otterpool Park Garden Town

$ increased service level here dependent on additional platform installed at Canterbury West

High Speed via Medway

Trains per hour (tph)	Peak Periods (Peak direction)		Off-Peak periods	
Terminus / Via:	St Pancras	Stratford	St Pancras	Stratford
Departure Station				
Ebbsfleet ~	8	8	7	7
Gravesend	2	2	2	2
Strood	2	2	2	2
Snodland	2	2	1	1
Maidstone West	2	2	1	1
Rochester	2	2	2	2
Chatham	2	2	2	2
Gillingham	2	2	2	2
Rainham	2	2	2	2
Sittingbourne	2	2	2	2
Faversham	2	2	2	2
Whitstable	2	2	1	1
Herne Bay	2	2	1	1
Birchington	2	2	1	1
Margate	2	2	1	1
Broadstairs	2	2	1	1
Ramsgate	2	2	1	1

~ includes service via Ashford

East Kent via Ashford

Trains per hour (tph)	Peak Periods (Peak direction)					Off-Peak periods				
Terminus / Via:	Charing X	Waterloo E	Cannon St	London B	Victoria	Charing X	Waterloo E	Cannon St	London B	Victoria
Departure Station										
Sevenoaks (via Ashford)	3	3	2	5		4	4		4	
Hildenborough (via Ashford)			2	2						
Tonbridge (via Ashford)	3	3	2	5		4	4		4	
Paddock Wood	3	3	2	5		4	4		4	
Marden	3	3	2	5		2	2		2	
Staplehurst	3	3	2	5		2	2		2	
Headcorn	3	3	2	5		2	2		2	
Pluckley	3	3	2	5		2	2		2	
Ashford	3	3	2	5		4	4		4	1
Wye	2	2	1	3		2	2		2	1
Chilham	2	2	1	3		2	2		2	1
Chartham	2	2	1	3		2	2		2	1
Canterbury West	2	2	1	3		2	2		2	1
Sturry	2	2	1	3		1	1		1	
Minster	2	2	1	3		1	1		1	
Minster (via Sandwich) #	1	1	0	1						
Westenhanger ~	2	2	1	3		2	2		2	

Trains per hour (tph)	Peak Periods (Peak direction)					Off-Peak periods				
Terminus / Via:	Charing X	Waterloo E	Cannon St	London B	Victoria	Charing X	Waterloo E	Cannon St	London B	Victoria
Departure Station										
Sandling	2	2	1	3		2	2		2	
Folkestone West	2	2	1	3		2	2		2	
Folkestone Central	2	2	1	3		2	2		2	
Dover Priory	2	2	1	3		2	2		2	
Martin Mill	2	2	1	3		1	1		1	
Walmer	2	2	1	3		1	1		1	
Deal	2	2	1	3		1	1		1	
Sandwich	2	2	1	3		1	1		1	
Thanet Parkway ^	2	2	1	3		3	3		3	
Ramsgate (via Ashford)	2	2	1	3		3	3		3	
Dumpton Park (via Ashford)										
Broadstairs (via Ashford)										
Margate (via Ashford)										

^ planned to open in 2022
~ to serve new Otterpool Park Garden Town
 # to serve schools traffic

East Kent via Medway

Trains per hour (tph)	Peak Periods (Peak direction)				Off-Peak periods			
Terminus / Via:	Victoria	Cannon St	Bromley S	Blackfriars	Victoria	Cannon St	Bromley S	Blackfriars
Departure Station								
Swanley (via Chatham)	3		4	1	3		3	
Farningham Road	2		3	1	2		2	
Longfield	3		4	1	3		3	
Meopham	3		4	1	3		3	
Sole Street	2		3	1	2		2	
Rochester (via Swanley)	3	3	4	1	4		4	
Chatham (via Swanley)	3	3	3		4		4	
Gillingham (via Swanley)	3	3	3		4		4	
Rainham	3	3	3		4		4	
Newington	3	2	3		3		3	
Swale (direct)								
Kemsley (direct)	1		1		1		1	
Queenborough (direct)	1		1		1		1	
Sheerness (direct)	1		1		1		1	
Sittingbourne	2	3	2		3		3	
Teynham	2	1	2		2		2	
Faversham	2	3	2		3		3	
Whitstable	2	3	2		1		1	

Trains per hour (tph)	Peak Periods (Peak direction)				Off-Peak periods			
Terminus / Via:	Victoria	Cannon St	Bromley S	Blackfriars	Victoria	Cannon St	Bromley S	Blackfriars
Departure Station								
Chestfield	2	2	2		1		1	
Herne Bay	2	3	2		1		1	
Birchington	2	3	2		1		1	
Westgate	2	2	2		1		1	
Margate (via Chatham)	2	3	2		1		1	
Broadstairs (via Chatham)	2	3	2		1		1	
Dumpton Park (via Chatham)	2	2	2		1		1	
Ramsgate (via Chatham)	2	3	2		1		1	
Selling	2		2		2		2	
Canterbury East	2		2		2		2	
Bekesbourne	2		2		2		2	
Adisham	2		2		2		2	
Aylesham	2		2		2		2	
Snowdown	2		2		2		2	
Shepherds Well	2		2		2		2	
Kearsney	2		2		2		2	
Dover Priory (via Chatham)	2		2		2		2	

Maidstone East Line

Trains per hour (tph)	Peak Periods (Peak direction)			Off-Peak periods		
Terminus / Via:	Victoria	Blackfriars	Bromley S	Victoria	Blackfriars	Bromley S
Departure Station		*TH*			*TH*	
Swanley (via Maid E)	2		2	2		2
Otford (via Maid E)	2		2	2		2
Kemsing	2		2	1		1
Borough Green & Wrotham	2		2	2		2
West Malling	2		2	2		2
East Malling	2		2	1		1
Barming	2		2	1		1
Maidstone East	2		2	2		2
Bearsted	2		2	2		2
Hollingbourne	2		2	1		1
Harrietsham	2		2	1		1
Lenham	2		2	1		1
Charing	2		2	1		1
Ashford (via Maid E)	2		2	2		2
Canterbury West (via Maid E)				1		1

TH - The former services to/from Blackfriars are presumed to be subsumed into the new Thameslink service between Ashford/Maidstone and Blackfriars

West Kent and Hastings Lines

Trains per hour (tph)	Peak Periods (Peak direction)			Off-Peak periods		
Terminus / Via:	Charing X	Cannon St	London B	Charing X	Cannon St	London B
Departure Station						
Dunton Green (stopper)	2	1	3	3		3
Sevenoaks (stopper)	2	1	3	3		3
Sevenoaks (via Tun Wells)	3	2	5	4		4
Hildenborough (via Tun Wells)	2	2	4	2		2
Tonbridge (via Tun Wells)	3	2	5	4		4
High Brooms	4	2	6	4		4
Tunbridge Wells	4	2	6	4		4
Hastings (via Tun Wells)	2	1	3	2		2

Note - lower tph for Hastings - CX trains at Sevenoaks & Tonbridge in peaks because they run fast to/from High Brooms

North Kent Line

Trains per hour (tph)	Peak Periods (Peak direction)				Off-Peak periods			
Terminus / Via:	Victoria	Charing X	Cannon St	London B	Victoria	Charing X	Cannon St	London B
Departure Station								
Dartford	3	6	4	10	2	6	2	8
Stone Crossing		2	2	4		2		2
Greenhithe		3	3	6	2	4		4
Swanscombe		2	2	4		2		2
Northfleet		2	2	4		2		2
Gravesend		3	3	6	2	4		4
Higham								
Strood (via Gravesend)								
Rochester (via Gravesend)	Stations east of Gravesend are now served by Thameslink service to/from Rainham							
Chatham (via Gravesend)								
Gillingham (via Gravesend)								
Rainham (via Gravesend)								

Community Rail Partnership Lines (Kent CRP)

Medway Valley Line

Trains per hour (tph)	Peak Periods (Peak direction)				Off-Peak periods			
Terminus / Via:	St Pancras	Stratford	Strood	Tonbridge	St Pancras	Stratford	Strood	Tonbridge
Departure Station							#	#
Strood	2	2		2	1	1		2
Cuxton			2	2			2	2
Halling			2	2			2	2
Snodland	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2
New Hythe			2	2			2	2
Aylesford			2	2			2	2
Maidstone Barracks			2	2			2	2
Maidstone West	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2
East Farleigh			2	2			1	1
Wateringbury			2	2			1	1
Yalding			2	2			1	1
Beltring			2	2			1	1
Paddock Wood			2	2			2	2

 # New off-peak service would operate 1tph all stations Strood to Tonbridge, and 1tph all stations Strood to Maidstone West then fast to Paddock Wood & Tonbridge

Sittingbourne – Sheerness Line

Trains per hour (tph)	**Peak Periods (Peak direction)**		**Off-Peak periods**	
Terminus / Via:	Victoria	Sittingbourne	Victoria	Sittingbourne
Departure Station				
Kemsley	1	2	1	2
Swale		2		2
Queenborough	1	2	1	2
Sheerness-on-Sea	1	2	1	2

Note: Kent CRP supports Sunday / Public Holiday service at 2tph, as on Mon-Sat off-peak
Additional service requested by Kent CRP at 22:55 Sittingbourne to Sheerness

GTR Thameslink in Kent

These services are not part of the South Eastern network but are included here to show the complete set of rail services in Kent

Sevenoaks (via Bat & Ball) to Blackfriars / City Thameslink / Farringdon / St Pancras / Welwyn GC*

Trains per hour (tph)	**Peak Periods (Peak direction)**			**Off-Peak periods**		
Terminus / Via:	Bromley S	Blackfriars	Welwyn GC	Bromley S	Blackfriars	Welwyn GC
Departure Station						
Swanley (via Bat & Ball)	2	2		2	2	
Eynsford	2	2		2	2	
Shoreham	2	2		2	2	
Otford (via Bat & Ball)	2	2		2	2	
Bat & Ball	2	2		2	2	
Sevenoaks (via Bat & Ball)	2	2		2	2	

** This Thameslink service currently terminates at Blackfriars, but it is planned to be extended north to Welwyn Garden City at a future date*

Ashford / Maidstone East to Blackfriars / City Thameslink / Farringdon / St Pancras / Cambridge #

Trains per hour (tph)	**Peak Periods (Peak direction)**				**Off-Peak periods**			
Terminus / Via:	Ashford	Maid East	Blackfriars	*Cambridge*	Ashford	Maid East	Blackfriars	*Cambridge*
Departure Station								
Ashford International^	*2^*	*2^*	*2^*	*2^*				
Bearsted^	*2^*	*2^*	*2^*	*2^*				
Maidstone East	*2*	*2*	*2*	*2*		*2*	*2*	*2*
West Malling (for Kings Hill)	*2*	*2*	*2*	*2*		*2*	*2*	*2*
Borough Green & Wrotham	*2*	*2*	*2*	*2*		*2*	*2*	*2*
Otford	*2*	*2*	*2*	*2*		*2*	*2*	*2*
Swanley	*2*	*2*	*2*	*2*		*2*	*2*	*2*
Blackfriars	*2*	*2*	*2*	*2*		*2*	*2*	*2*
City Thameslink	*2*	*2*	*2*	*2*		*2*	*2*	*2*
Farringdon	*2*	*2*	*2*	*2*		*2*	*2*	*2*
St Pancras International	*2*	*2*	*2*	*2*		*2*	*2*	*2*
Cambridge	*2*	*2*	*2*	*2*		*2*	*2*	*2*

 # The introduction of this new Thameslink service has already been delayed on four occasions. As there is considerable uncertainty about its operation through the central core between Blackfriars and St Pancras due to doubts about operational resilience of the planned 24tph level of service on this section, it is likely that when introduced the service will terminate at Blackfriars (bay platforms) and so will need to be routed via the Catford Loop rather than via London Bridge.

^ *Early and late journeys only will operate to/from Ashford daily for operational reasons*

Rainham to London Bridge / Blackfriars / City Thameslink / Farringdon / St Pancras / Luton

Trains per hour (tph)	Peak Periods (Peak direction)				Off-Peak periods			
Terminus / Via:	Rainham	London B	Blackfriars	Luton	Rainham	London B	Blackfriars	Luton
Departure Station								
Rainham	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Gillingham	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Chatham	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Rochester	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Strood	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Higham	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Gravesend	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Northfleet	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Swanscombe	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Greenhithe (for Blue Water)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Stone Crossing	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Dartford	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
London Bridge	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Blackfriars	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
City Thameslink	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Farringdon	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
St Pancras International	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Luton	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

GTR Southern in Kent

These services are not part of the South Eastern network but are included here to show the complete set of rail services in Kent

Ashford - Hastings Line **Marshlink - part of Southeast CRP**

Trains per hour (tph)	**Peak Periods (Peak direction)**				**Off-Peak periods**			
Terminus / Via:	Ashford	Rye	Hastings	Eastbourne	Ashford	Rye	Hastings	Eastbourne
Departure Station								
Ham Street	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Appledore	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1

Note: see High Speed (via Ashford) for details of proposed HS service to Rye, Hastings, Bexhill and Eastbourne via Ashford
When HS service is introduced, current stopping service will reduce in peaks from 2tph to 1tph

Oxted - Uckfield Line **Part of Southeast CRP**

Trains per hour (tph)	**Peak Periods (Peak direction)**				**Off-Peak periods**			
Terminus / Via:	London B	E Croydon	Oxted	Uckfield	London B	E Croydon	Oxted	Uckfield
Departure Station								
Edenbridge Town	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
Hever	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
Cowden	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1

Tonbridge - Redhill Line **Part of Southeast CRP**

Trains per hour (tph)	**Peak Periods (Peak direction)**	**Off-Peak periods**
Terminus / Via:	Redhill	Redhill
Departure Station		
Tonbridge	2	1
Leigh	2	1
Penshurst	2	1
Edenbridge	2	1

Note: there is an aspiration for a new through regional rail service linking Gatwick with Kent via this CRP route, as detailed in the main rail strategy document